


HEADS UP



By MATT SCHESLEY

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Heads Up
. in the Commonwealth

By

MATT SCHESLEY



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TO AN AMERICAN BOY SCOUT

a citizen whose principle
is as dear as life.

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PROLOGUE

CARRIE

Enters the stage before the curtain from the right. Facing the audience from near right center against medium bright footlights, the elevator girl speaks. Most citizens are really anxious to observe the workings of the state government. If you folks are like that, you've come to the right place. You see, since I run the elevator at the airport at our Capitol, I hear all about state government . . . right from the state people themselves. Now since it is almost time for me to step back of the curtain and get back to work on the elevator, I will take just a moment to tell you about the origin and development of *Heads Up In The Commonwealth*. It is, to me, a most revealing, patriotic pageant. It could be in this state or any state. To enjoy it most, maybe it's best to assume it is right over at our own Capitol. *Heads Up In The Commonwealth* was conceived and assembled by Matt Schesley, a former member of the United States Air Force. It began on the thought that the rule of the Services reverses in the Commonwealth. In the Services the top-titled enrollees are the brass. The ranks are the faithful and the vigilant. In the Commonwealth, John Q. Citizen-Voter is the brass. The Governor, with every member of his administration, is the force of the faithful and the vigilant. In what you are about to see, the struggles of the voter and the mythical Governor are as timely and enduring as the theatre itself. Lines are not forced because they portray real problems. If any places or characters appearing in *Heads Up In The Commonwealth* resemble places or persons known to you, I am almost certain no such resemblance was intended. Any such discovery should be considered a tribute to the cosmopolitan solidarity of every neighborly sovereign Commonwealth in the Union. And now, the cast of characters as we appear—starting with me.

Characters

CARRIE CENTER

Carrie.....Elevator girl at the
airport terminal

BENJY DIKES

Benjy.....Bicycle delivery boy for a
telegraph company

REBECCA WINTERS

Rebecca.....Career lady in the
Commonwealth's Civil
Service Commission

ALAN RICHARDSON

Alan.....Governor-elect

JIM WHITE

Jim.....Executive-secretary
appointed by Alan

JERRY JOLLY

Jerry.....Driver employed by a
taxicab company

HAL JEFFREY

Hal.....Correspondent for a
metropolitan morning
newspaper

GENE ROGERS

Gene.....Correspondent for a daily
newspaper in Alan
Richardson's hometown

SAM BARRINGTON

Sam.....Aged colored butler at the
Governor's mansion

CHARACTERS—(Continued)

MRS. AUDRY HILLTOP

Audry.....A prominent Capitol city
society matron

MRS. JOHN WILLIAM TUCKER

Mrs. Tucker.....A mansion guest,
granddaughter and daughter
of the past Governors
Young

GOVERNOR COLEMAN'S GHOST

Bradley.....The persistent "Spirit" of
the late Governor Bradley
Coleman

MARTHA RILEY

Martha.....Favorite granddaughter of
the late Governor Coleman

MRS. HARVEY WILLOWBY

Mrs. Willowby.....A mansion guest, wife of
the ailing former Governor
Harvey Willowby

HARRIET HANKS

Harriet.....A mansion guest, the
granddaughter of the late
Governor Russel Thompson

CATHERINE ANN GRUNDY

Catherine.....A mansion guest, a daughter
of the late Governor
Bruce Grundy

JOHN HOWARD

The Engineer.....A photographer and sound
recording engineer for a television network
affiliate

Carrie exits right. In a moment, the curtain rises.

HEADS UP IN THE COMMONWEALTH

A Satirical Comedy in Four Acts

By Matt Schesley

Act I.

SCENE 1.

Late afternoon of the day before gubernatorial inauguration day.

The first floor elevator nook, in the lobby of the administration building, at Capitol city's commercial airport.

Benjy pushes the elevator button. He watches the position indicator move from two to one. As the door opens, the elevator is revealed empty except for the elevator girl.

CARRIE

Going up, please. Benjy enters the elevator. The door closes and the floor indicator moves from one to three. After a brief pause, the indicator moves from three to one. As the door opens, two passengers emerge, Rebecca—carrying an unfolded newspaper, Alan—carrying an initialed briefcase.

REBECCA

Mister, your persistence deserves a reward. You hold the newspaper . . . I don't approve of strangers reading over my shoulder and breathing down my neck.

ALAN

Begging your pardon, Madam, I believe I'll accept your kindness. He takes the half-opened newspaper. It was really the editorial that caught my eye.

REBECCA

Not my earrings? Carrie observes the conversation in interested silence.

ALAN

Reading aloud. Nobody owes any gratitude to anybody. Voters of this state owe nothing to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party. The

voters of this state, as citizens, individually employ the public officials. Public duty is performed only in accordance with the law and with their oaths of office. If the performance is good, the officials have done no more than their duty. **Drops the hand holding (Rebecca's) newspaper and looks at her.** Young lady, what do you make of that writer's opinion?

REBECCA

I wouldn't know, Mister. My job is Civil Service and that writing is about politics. I have no interest in politics. . . . And now, may I exercise my prerogative?

ALAN

Why yes, Miss. I suppose so.

REBECCA

Then give me my newspaper. I paid for it. I've worked all day. My first chance to read it will be on the plane home. I do this every day.

ALAN

Of course. Campaigning has, I suppose, made me rude. I really don't wish to offend. **Hands the newspaper to Rebecca.**

REBECCA

So—you're a politician. The Capitol is going to be full of men like you. I just know it. **Turns and leaves right stage quickly with a flirtatious air.**

Alan Glances at Carrie who is studying him with a penetrating stare. Uncomfortable, he tries to smile. Jim, carrying two suitcases, enters right door at his back.

CARRIE

Pardon me, Mister. It's none of my business. But, I bet you're new around here.

ALAN

Yes. **Jim pauses behind Alan, not intruding.**

CARRIE

Well, sure as my name's Carrie Center, I've seen lots of you come . . . and about as many go. You brag about campaigning for some ticket, so the Capitol puts you to work. But remember this, it's employees like her who keep working. Wise up to Civil Service and you can stay longer. Of course, it's really none of my business . . . I have to go up now.

ALAN

Your point is well taken. I'll look into it. **Jim sets the suitcases down. Alan turns around with a recognizing smile. The elevator door closes. Indicator moves from one to three.**

JIM

I hear you aren't an undisputed celebrity.

ALAN

No—hardly. Remember me? I'm the successful candidate who forgot to campaign. I'm the political accident of the century. You expected me to be recognized . . . Ridiculous!

JIM

We can hope it will become less ridiculous as we progress. Our car will be here in a moment.

ALAN

We can also hope they sell my favorite brand of shaving cream. While I was waiting for you, I tried to buy a tube at the sundries stand upstairs. They acted as if they had never heard of it.

JIM

There's no need for that tube, Alan. As Governor, you'll want to conserve your energies. We can arrange for a downtown barber to make a daily stop at the mansion for your shave and any other needed service. **Indicator moves from three to two.**

ALAN

That may be alright on occasion, Jim, but I intend to sell as many mansion wheel chairs as circumstances permit.

JIM

Very well. I'll make a note to get your brand of cream somewhere. **Indicator moves from two to one. Elevator door opens. Benjy steps off.**

BENJY

Glances at Alan's briefcase. Say . . . those your initials?

ALAN

Yes, the letters A. R. identify me sometimes. **The elevator door closes. The indicator moves from one to two.**

BENJY

Then maybe you're the "Hon" Alan Richardson, care of the passenger desk, Capitol city's airport.

ALAN

Yes, I am. Benjy takes off his cap and removes telegram from inside.

BENJY

That guy! He said you'd left. **Hands signature pad to Alan with the telegram. Sign here. . . . Why do you guys put "Hon" in front of your names**

when you send each other telegrams? I look for somebody important when I see that.

ALAN

Son, I don't care for the "Hon" any more than you do. **Hands signed pad back to Benjy. Starts to silently read.**

BENJY

Say, you're new around here, aren't you?

ALAN

I consistently give that impression.

BENJY

Don't they have silver where you come from? Alan glances to Jim who put his hand in his own pants pocket.

JIM

Here you are, Sonny. I'm his secretary.

BENJY

Well, I'll be exasperated. Thanks! Benjy turns and as he leaves he looks back to say: He must be an important guy but he sure doesn't look like it. The elevator floor indicator moves from two to three.

ALAN

Drops telegram into his briefcase. The state chairman wants me to interview the man he nominated for Commissioner of Civil Service—the day after tomorrow.

JIM

Outside, just a moment ago, I spoke to that Commissioner candidate who is on your appointment book for the day after tomorrow. She's the Commission secretary I mentioned who commutes to her work by airline.

ALAN

Now look here, Jim . . . Well, the employees are mostly women. Okay, Jim. I'll see her.

JIM

Now you're getting on that four-year victory wagon, Alan.

ALAN

There is one thing you had better not forget, Jim. If you step on the state chairman's toes too often, he's going to step on your toes once.

JIM

I know about the legislative stick he holds. Keep me with you, Alan. We'll sweat him out.

ALAN

I just encountered a government girl commuter, too. Jim, what does the state pay the women employees?

JIM

Oh, about a fifth the amount of your salary.

ALAN

And they commute daily from home to the Capitol by air?

JIM

Some may, but why the question? Your concern, I'm sure, is the overall picture. We'll plaster every newspaper, magazine and TV screen with Alan Richardson for four years.

ALAN

Wait until we accomplish something. If I'm a flop, I may not want publicity—or re-election. **Jerry enters from the left.**

JERRY

Are you the gentlemen who called for airport service?

JIM

Yes, I had the hostess on the plane to radio twenty minutes before we landed. You may call it service. **Indicator moves from three to two.**

JERRY

It's real service whenever you ask for Jerry Jolly. Always tell them to send Jerry. . . . I'll take your luggage. Is this all?

JIM

That's what arrived with us, Jerry. The rest will follow—and be delivered, I believe.

JERRY

To Jim. I recall your face. **Picks up one of the suitcases. To Alan.** But I can't place you. I'll take that briefcase. . . . A. R., huh?—Guess you're new around here. Plan to stay a spell?

ALAN

Long enough to become acquainted, I hope. **Jerry places Alan's briefcase under his left arm and with his right hand lifts the second suitcase.**

JERRY

Well, whenever you need service, tell them to send Jerry. **Walks off left. Alan and Jim take a step towards left door. Jim pauses as Alan stops short and speaks thoughtfully.**

ALAN

Jim, I never believed a Governor could be so unknown around here. Perhaps you'd better start that publicity campaign of yours—even before the accomplishments.

JIM

Publicity and accomplishment can work hand-in-hand, Mister Governor-elect. A few shouts about some laundering in the Civil Service family would be a good start.

ALAN

You handle it, Jim. But never forget. . . . With the Civil Service girls there are unmentionables that must never hang on the Capitol clothes-line.

JIM

Such as politics?

ALAN

Such as politics! **Jim and Alan follow Jerry's steps out left to the cab.**

ACT I.—Scene 2.

Mid-afternoon of the next day.

The Governor's office quarters in the Capitol.

Jim, alone, is seated at the desk in left front stage.

JIM

Phoning. Sam, are you making yourself useful to the new Governor? . . . Now we'll keep this just between you and me. He's not very used to a personal butler. For the first few days maybe it's better to let him do for himself mostly, and then you can sort of take over as you see the chance . . . No, you don't need to go that far. You can serve all his meals. Otherwise, he might never find the kitchen or dining room—and even a Governor can starve. I'll not set hard and fast rules. It's his house and it's your problem . . . But you will do one thing for me today, won't you? . . . Alright—now just keep reminding him of one thing or another that he should see or know about. Show him the garage. Show him the attic. Take him down to look at the potato bin in the basement. Anything, Sam—get it? Anything, so he doesn't come down to see his office. . . . That last Governor left it looking like a windstorm hit it. He must have moved out on the double. It's going to take me a while to clean up and you know it would be bad luck for a Governor to see his office in disarray. . . . Yeah, dis-are-ray, —that's just as bad as a black rabbit's foot on groundhog day. . . . Okay, Sam. . . . I'm depending on you. Goodbye. . . . Yes, Goodbye. **Jim gets up from the desk. He begins putting things in order as he crosses the room. He straightens one of several crooked hanging pictures. He uprights an ash stand and then opens the corridor door. Calls outside. Well hello, Sonny. Did you follow me here?**

BENJY

Standing outside the door, dusting his trousers. Say, you get here early, don't you? It doesn't seem right for anyone to take telegrams here this early in the day. I figured I'd have to wait a spell. I've got thirty-eight of them too, it says here. **Follows Jim into the room.** Say, why didn't you tell me that A. R. fellow with you was the Governor?

JIM

Well Sonny, he wasn't the Governor then. He took the oath about an hour ago. Want me to sign the pad?

BENJY

Oh sure, you said you was his secretary. The other secretary always signed for the last Governor. **Jim takes the telegrams. He signs the pad and hands it to Benjy.**

JIM

What sort of secretary did the last Governor have?

BENJY

He was okay . . . about as big as you, but he didn't stick out in front as much. He was okay . . . he had more hair than you have. He was okay . . . he always had some change in his pocket. He was . . .

JIM

That's enough. I believe I know his type. **Hands Benjy a coin.**

BENJY

The day before Christmas he gave me a buck. **Jim turns to his desk. He lays down the telegrams.**

JIM

Okay and next time knock on the door. If I'm here, I'll answer. There's no need to sit on the corridor floor to wait. If there's no answer, take the Governor's telegrams over to the mansion.

BENJY

But the other secretary said to . . .

JIM

Interrupting. Never mind the other secretary. A sizeable plurality sent him and that crowd packing. **Points to himself.** From now on this secretary is sexton and organ grinder around here.

BENJY

You're boss with me as long as those coins don't run out. **Goes out door. Jim continues readjusting office. Hal enters.**

HAL

I want to introduce myself. I'm Hal Jeffrey, legislative correspondent for the metropolitan morning sheet.

JIM

You don't say. **Turns around only long enough for a very quick handshake.** I'm Jim White. I had your job when it used to be a real newspaper. Seven editions a day. Anyone ever mention—J i m W h i t e—around the office?

HAL

Jim White! . . . there are so many . . . Jim . . . let's see . . . the other day . . . no . . .

JIM

Don't strain yourself. I know how it is. Look up at this picture. **Points.** Who is he?

HAL

How come the test?

JIM

I just want to show you how memories go. That man was Governor up to sixteen years ago. Tommy Maxwell. Sure you remember—when I tell you. That's the disappointment of fame. It isn't real. Now what's on your mind, Hal?

HAL

Just one question. Is it true that Governor Richardson snores?

JIM

I'm forever thankful I started journalism in the days of the old-school. When we learned to ask questions, we put sense into them. Why not ask me which year Richardson will become President of the United States?

HAL

How do you like that? A Governor gets the oath. But before he has a chance to count the coat hangers in the closet you wise guys are buying him an upper berth to D. C.

JIM

There's no need to get excited. We'll all be around here for quite a while.

HAL

I think you're getting overworked here before you get started. Maybe I should give you a hand.

JIM

Offers a feather duster from the table drawer. I want every surface above

the floor level spotless. The clean-up and straighten-up job progresses briefly. Then Gene enters.

GENE

If this isn't a surprise! . . . I knew when I left here eight years ago that they'd find some appropriate spot for Hal Jeffrey to hold down. Now—I find you in the Governor's chamber. . . . Who's your pal?

HAL

Gene, meet Jim White—allegedly executive secretary to the Governor, lately of the metropolitan morning daily, of journalism's old-school.

GENE

I thought I could see a trace of printers' ink on your brow. Glad to know you, White. Gene shakes hands with Jim.

HAL

Gene Rogers corresponds for what passes for a daily in Governor Richardson's home town.

JIM

I can see from the baby skin behind the ears of this generation that the day of scoops has passed.

GENE

Scoops or not, I'm here for the duration.

HAL

What do your readers do for Capitol dope when the opposition is in office, Gene?

GENE

For that the chief grabs the nearest scandal sheet and starts copying. He sees no need for expensive coverage when he's not among friends. . . . From here out my copy is to look like the official organ of the Richardson Admiration Society. I have my orders. Of course, after eight years away, I'll have to ask some questions to get in stride. Jim drops the dust rag he is using to clean the mantel. His jaw is firmly set as he walks with deliberate step to the left rear corner of the stage. He picks up the yardstick standing in the corner and carries it to Gene.

HAL

Awh awh—Gene, I should have warned you. Jim's touchy about mention of searching questions.

JIM

Handing Gene the yardstick. Before you start mumbling nonsensical queries, son, line up this carpet six and a half inches from the wall—all

the way. If it doesn't come out, make it straight anyway. Somebody has to teach you fellows from the new-school to use initiative.

GENE

Taking the yardstick. I've been here ten minutes and already I'm beginning to wish the old administration had never left.

ACT I. — Scene 3.

The next morning.

The Governor's office quarters in the Capitol.

Sam enters the room. He finds Jim in a condition of personal disarray. He is asleep in his desk chair, his head leaning well back. Sam approaches cautiously. He nudges Jim first lightly, then emphatically.

SAM

Mista sec-'tary boss, de Gubb-'nah am in de buildin'. Ya hear, let's wake up. Ah say, Mista sec-'tary boss. Ya gotta wake up, suh.

JIM

What? . . . hunh? . . . Oh, it's you, Sam! Haven't seen you in years and years. **Yawns.** . . . Who was the Governor then? . . . Governor, Governor. Where's the Governor? **Quickly gets to his feet.**

SAM

Das jess what ah's been tryin' to tell ya. He's done already here almost, suh. **Jim stands. He straightens his tie, pulls his coat smoother. With a one hand motion whips back his unkempt hair. The phone rings. He lifts the instrument.**

JIM

Governor Richardson's office. . . . Oh yes, Miss Winters. . . . It may be thrilling Miss Winters, but you mustn't assume the appointment is yours. So far as I know, my own recommendation is the only one backing you. I found your qualifications suitable, but I don't dispense jobs. It will be entirely up to the Governor. . . . Don't thank me. The important thing, I would say, is whether you contacted any party officials over the weekend. . . . Now, you needn't be unduly encouraged or discouraged. I'm sure Governor Richardson and I both understand that you wouldn't take the appointment if political influence is involved. . . . Alright now, where are you calling from? . . . Good. I suggest you hike on in here. My guess is the Governor will see you sometime before lunch. . . . Goodbye, Miss Winters.

SAM

Dat Miss Winters, if she am de one ah's sho' she am, ah hopes she's a-leavin' those handsprings and cart-wheels wherever she's a-comin' from.

JIM

I've heard of her gymnastic prowess, but I have full confidence that it's reserved for parties and more jubilant occasions.

SAM

Ah hopes you am a-hunnerd percent right, Mista sec-'tary boss.

JIM

At least the floor's clean. She wouldn't get her hands and chin soiled if the mood should strike her.

SAM

Ya'suh, dis office show am clean.

JIM

I don't suppose the Governor has had a chance to mention it yet, but the mansion is going to be the scene of the most unusual party the city has ever seen.

SAM

Ah don't mind de unusual so much—jess as long as eberbody keeps de calm spirits.

JIM

You won't need to worry about this party, Sam. All the guests will be descendents of past Governors or past Governors themselves.

SAM

Das jess de kind o'party ah likes Mista sec-'tary boss, wheah nobody gives nobody theah troubles.

JIM

It may be a long way off, Sam. Just keep listening.

SAM

Ah'll be a-waitin'! **Alan enters. He hands Sam his hat. Sam places the hat on a high hook on the wrap tree.**

ALAN

Sam, you're a good man. You see me leave and you meet me when I arrive.

SAM

Ya' suh. Ah tries, Mista Gubb-'nah boss.

ALAN

Good morning, Jim.

JIM

Steps closer to Alan. Good morning, Alan. I've been hoping the newly inaugurated Governor would come in for a good look around.

ALAN

Jim, the new Governor is here for more than a look. I want to earn some of the salary the citizens have started to pay me. . . . Alan begins a semi-circular stroll around the wall. Jim follows close to his steps. Alan pauses near a row of wall hung portraits of former Governors. . . . I presume that if I finish my term honorably, my likeness may someday join those happy countenances.

SAM

Turns near doorway toward Alan and Jim. Mista Gubb-'nah boss—Ah'd nebah recommend dat ya rush up ya likeness. Most all ob dem am enjoyin' a mighty quiet reward, suh—ah hopes. Jim takes a few steps from Alan towards his own desk.

JIM

Would you care to see your congratulatory telegrams, Alan? Alan joins Jim beside the desk upon which the messages rest.

ALAN

Certainly, Jim. And if I'm correct that this room is my private office . . . Points to left stage. . . . I'll take them in there.

JIM

That's it, Alan. You may as well be getting used to it.

ALAN

Picks up stack of telegrams. You can knock when it's time for me to receive callers.

JIM

You can count on it, Governor. Alan goes through the office door left and closes it behind him. Sam relaxes and begins to move about the room.

SAM

Dis heah book-table hab sho' been heah a long space ob time, Mista sec-'tary boss. Ah recalls as how mah pa done told me Gubb-'nah Bradley Coleman, up theah, always tossed his hat on the shelf-ledge—like dis. Takes Alan's hat from the wrap tree and tosses it onto the under-slung table shelf.

JIM

Better take it easy, Sam. Governor Richardson just bought that hat the day before yesterday.

SAM

Ya'suh. Replaces the hat to the wrap tree. Rebecca enters. She is overdressed and she almost slinks in her walking gait.

REBECCA

Good morning, Mr. White. Since I had this appointment today, I scheduled one of my department visits in this building. People who have so much to

do must make every minute count. **Sam sits down on a straight chair near the door.**

JIM

Good morning, Miss Winters. Yes, I knew you were close by from our phone conversation. I want to say frankly that Commissioner has always been a man's job. No one seems certain that a woman could conceivably fill it. The Governor is completely uncommitted. I am free to say only this: Whoever starts must be a master of diplomacy, administrative decisions and occasional deception. Do you still wish to see the Governor?

REBECCA

You know, Mister White, that's the big reason—the only reason—for poor little me to come. Besides to see you, I mean.

JIM

Good enough. Then be seated, Miss Winters. **Rebecca selects a severe chair with wooden back and arms. Jim walks to the door of the Governor's private office. He knocks.**

ALAN

Yes.

JIM

Miss Winters is out here, Governor.

ALAN

Fine, I'll be out in a moment. **Jim pauses briefly in front of Rebecca's chair to speak before returning to his desk.**

JIM

When you speak to him, just be simple and direct. . . . You know, after all, the Governor is just another man.

REBECCA

I know he's just a man. **Adjusts hat.** But he must be a big, wonderful, wonderful man. **Carefully crosses legs, adjusts her skirt folds. Alan opens the door. Jim rises and walks until he is standing directly in between Rebecca and the door. Alan confronts Jim.**

JIM

Governor, Miss Winters is secretary to the Commissioner of Civil Service. **Jim steps aside so that Alan may conveniently proceed to his caller. Alan smiles and approaches Rebecca. His smile leaves and his chin drops.**

REBECCA

Oh, I'm so glad . . . Governor. **Looks up to face Alan. Oh no, no! Drops her head to her lap in uncontrolled sobs after recognizing the subject of her air terminal encounter.**

ALAN

Recovering composure. Come, come . . . dear girl. This is no manner in which to visit the Governor. Sam rises and hurries to Alan's side. He bends to gaze at the suffering Rebecca.

SAM

Mista Gubb-'nah boss, if Miss Winters hab done come down sick, ah'll fetch de nurse.

JIM

I'm so very sorry, Governor . . . Miss Winters. Whatever may have transpired, you may be certain no word will be breathed. Sam's confidence has been long established and of course you know how I am. A moment of silence ensues except for Rebecca's sobs.

ALAN

Sam! Miss Winters will need no nurse. Jim! There is nothing to be breathed. Miss Winters and I are not old friends or new friends. She has come here on an official call. . . . Come along now, Miss Winters. Alan leads Rebecca to his private office and closes the door.

SAM

Ah's seen some pow-'ful goin's-on dese 'leven past Gubb-'nah's had, but ah's neber seen a new one start like as ah thinks ah's seen dis one start.

JIM

However this turns out, don't say a word about it to anybody.

SAM

Ah's jess as quiet, Mista- sec-'tary boss, as dat Gubb-'nah Bradley Coleman up dere. Points to the picture. And he's jess molderin' away beneath de sod. Ah ain't seen nothin,' ah don't know nothin' and what's more, ah wasn't eben dere when it didn't happen—eben if it did. There is a quick rhythmic knocking at the corridor door.

JIM

Tell whoever it is that the Governor is in conference—unless they want to see me.

SAM

Ya'suh. Al'll tell dem. Walks deliberately to the door and opens it. De Gubb-'nah am all tied up in what we am assumin' am an official consultatin' conference. . . . Oh, it am you. Turns at door to face Jim. It am Mista Benjy with the wire-grams, suh.

JIM

Leaning forward to see past the partly opened door. You're right on the job, Benjy. Give Sam the telegrams and the pad. He'll bring my signature

right out to you. Sam takes a large stack of telegrams and the pad from Benjy. He looks at the stack with mild wonder and interest as he carries it to Jim. Jim makes a quick counting of the telegrams.

JIM

Fifty-six this time. Looks at the pad. And that's what the ticket calls for. . . . Right. . . . Signs the pad. Sam takes the pad Jim hands to him and returns it to Benjy at the door.

BENJY

You know, Sam—sometimes I wish the pro-silver advocates had never moved out of the Capitol.

JIM

Overhears as he opens one of the telegrams. Before Benjy changes his politics—if he has any—come and take this over to him. Reaches in his pocket and brings out a coin. Sam carries the token to the smiling Benjy.

BENJY

You can tell the sexton and organ grinder that he has made my whole day brighter.

SAM

Ya'suh. . . . Tell . . . Oh ya'suh, ah'll tell him. Sam closes the door and speaks as he comes towards Jim's desk. Dat Benjy say . . .

JIM

(Interrupting) Never mind, Sam. I heard him. He's been coming here so long he feels he's a stockholder. . . . Now just sit down. I'm going to run through some of these congratulatory telegrams. You can tell me if any of the signers were callers at the mansion during the last administration. Sam seats himself near Jim's desk.

SAM

Ya'suh. Ah's listnin.'

JIM

After selecting a telegram, reads. Congratulations for getting elected. Our best wishes to right soon get the chuck holes fixed at the intersection of Market highway and Lanesdale road. . . . Signed, Harry Lane, Mayor of Lanesdale.

SAM

Na'suh. Not him.

JIM

Lays previous wire aside face-down and selects another. This one says . . . I knowed all along you could win. Wife and me voted for you. Tell

them thieves off. Kick them all out. . . . Signed by Grover Cleveland Bob Smith.

SAM

Ah can't 'sociate him and whatsmore ah don't 'prove his attitude.

JIM

Again selecting. Reads. Richardson, Richardson beat the other. . . . Now he'll run for political cover. . . . Like his promises big and fat. . . . He'll grow a tail just like a rat. . . . Signed I. R. Voter. . . . Always has to be a wise guy. Crumples the paper.

SAM

Ah don't believe Mista Gubb-'nah boss would like that. Jim tosses the crumpled telegram to the wastebasket.

JIM

I don't believe he needs to see it. The private office door opens quickly. Rebecca bursts happily into the room. She hustles around Jim's desk.

REBECCA

Oh you dear, dear Mr. White. You're the most wonderful man in the world. Kisses Jim's forehead, steps back and conceitedly walks toward the corridor door. I could just turn cart-wheels. Jim sits silent and amazed.

SAM

Ya'Mam. We knows, mam. But if ya doesn't mind considerable—we hopes ya jess forget 'bout de cart-wheels for de present.

REBECCA

More composed. Good-bye now. . . . It's going to be so wonderful coming in often. I can hardly wait until noon to tell the girls. They will so envy me. But, I must get back. I've been gone so long the work has probably all gone wrong. Jim waves his right hand feebly and reaches for his handkerchief with his left. Rebecca leaves.

JIM

She says she's been gone. I'd say she is gone. Slowly and carefully pats his forehead with the handkerchief.

SAM

Voice lowered. Ya doesn't s'pose they am engaged.

JIM

Confidentially. In an office like this, Sam, we aren't going to suppose anything. . . . We're just going to pray. Alan opens the private office door and meets Jim's eyes with a smile. Sam stands and moves close to the corridor door.

ALAN

Jim, I'm going to have to make you my personnel manager. Miss Winters is a splendid selection.

JIM

I'm glad you feel that way.

ALAN

Beneath her astute professional manner, I've found a heart pulsing for the troubled employee. Her understanding of young people is amazing. But above all, she insists on characteristics of fitness and dependability in all her applicants.

SAM

She don't mean dose hand-springs and cart-wheels 'bout that fitness, do she?

ALAN

No, Sam. **Turning to Jim.** And Jim, I want you to telephone Mrs. Audry Hilltop, a local social leader Miss Winters recommended.

JIM

Yes, sir, I'm making a note of it. . . . Phone Mrs. Audry Hilltop. **Writes on his desk pad.**

ALAN

Mrs. Hilltop has been in touch with occupants of the Governor's mansion for many years. She could help us make plans for the Governors and descendents get acquainted party. . . . I am going out for a few minutes now. **Takes his hat from the wrap tree. Leaves the office.**

SAM

Mista sec-'tary boss, ah's afraid what Miss' Hilltop og-'nizes, dat Miss Winters and her hand-springs am a-goin' to finish.

Act II.

SCENE 1.

Twenty-seven months later, a Saturday at tea time.

A spacious dining room in the Governor's mansion.

Alan stands near the centerpiece of the long table in rear center stage. Sam appears from right holding a spare handful of guest announcement cards.

SAM

Gubb-'nah Richardson, de guests hab arrived. But they am all descendents ob Gubb-'nahs. Seems de past Gubb-'nahs am all ailin' or died off.

ALAN

Thank you, Sam. You may ask Mr. White to show them in. You may announce whoever came without apology for those who didn't come.

SAM

Goes to the door and calls to Jim. Mista sec-'tary boss, Mista Gubb-'nah Richardson wants to see de guests in heah.

Jim comes in accompanying Audry. They pause at the doorway. From near side of the right doorway. We's proud to hab dis scatterin' ob fine guests. Mostly dere pappys and dere grandpappys hab been Gubb-'nahs here. Ah or mah pa knowed most all ob dem. 'Fore ah starts, ah's announcin' de honorable Mista James White, exec-'tive sec-'tary to de Gubb-'nah... Mista White ya am to 'scort Miss' Audry Hilltop—de most societiest lady ob de Capitol city, to speak to de Gubb-'nah. She am de hostess dis afternoon. Audry takes Jim's left arm. They walk across the stage and facing Alan pause to exchange compliments not discernible to the audience. Mista sec-'tary White will 'scort Miss' John William Tucker, gran-daughtah ob Gubb-'nah Richard Young and daughtah ob Gubb-'nah Dick Young, to speak to the Gubb-'nah. She am de only double-heda dis state got. Audry withdraws a short distance from Alan. She stands at his left—the two forming the receiving line. All voices on stage are held to a low pitched inaudible sound except Sam and Governor (Bradley) Coleman's Ghost. Talking is detected by slightly exaggerated lip movement and simple hand gesture more than by sound. Jim moves to Mrs. Tucker's right. She takes his left arm and they walk to face Alan and Audry. Jim withdraws and returns to the doorway where other guests are waiting. Bradley, visible only to Alan and the audience, appears in the doorway. He dodges between the ladies and enters the room unheralded. Alan's full attention to the guests prevents him from observing the newcomer. Bradley, the bewhiskered figure wearing attire of more than a generation ago, steps forward and left in the right front area.

BRADLEY

Moves about easily, usually facing the audience close to the footlights. I'm going to tell you later what I'm doing here. You folks probably wouldn't believe it right off if I told you who I am. Come to think of it, it's probably none of your business.

SAM

Mista sec-'tary White will 'scort Miss Martha Riley, gran-daughtah ob Gubb-'nah Bradley Coleman to meet Gubb-'nah Richardson and Miss' Hilltop. I rec-'lect from what mah pa done told me dat her muthah, Miss' Elizabeth Riley, done got married right heah in dis mansion. Jim stands to Martha's right. Mrs. Tucker concludes her remarks with Alan and moves a few steps left (to her right) directly in front of Audry. Mrs. Tucker and Audry converse in lip motion and pantomime while Jim escorts Martha to Alan.

BRADLEY

I'll say that Sam is pretty good at recollecting. Martha never had so many beaux as her mother, I guess. Philip Bacon used to be sweet on her. I'm sure he was headed for no good. . . . So she's still Miss—I'm glad she didn't marry Philip. Mrs. Tucker withdraws a short distance from Audry. Martha concludes her words with Alan and shifts slightly left. She begins light conversation with Audry. Jim goes to the doorway to meet the next guest.

SAM

Glances at another reference card. Mista sec-'tary White will 'scort Miss' Harvey Willowby, wife ob Gubb-'nah Harvey Willowby—to speak to de Gubb-'nah and Miss' Hilltop. Mrs. Willowby takes Jim's left arm and they walk to Alan.

BRADLEY

Harvey had a little trouble getting started into state politics. He served one term in the assembly and was defeated for re-election. He seemed a bright young chap, more trustworthy than most. He was a natural for the road and bridge commission when that vacancy came along. I was starting my third year as Governor then. I'm glad I appointed Harvey. It must have been just the boost he needed. Turns and looks at Mrs. Willowby who is facing Alan as they pass pleasantries. Harvey was a shy young man. I see he developed good taste when he found courage to marry. She's almost as pretty as a Gibson Girl—some years Harvey's junior, I would guess. Martha withdraws from Audry and joins Mrs. Tucker in conversation in the left rear area of the stage. Mrs. Willowby moves her attention to Audry. Jim returns to the doorway for Harriet.

SAM

Studies one of his reference cards. Mista sec-'tary White will 'scort Miss Harriet Hanks, gran-daughtah ob Gubb-'nah Russel Thompson. Miss Harriet were 'bout so high—startin' school when she used to visit her granddaddy at de mansion. Mah goodness, how dat little girl hab growed!

Jim displays marked pleasure in walking with the youthful Harriet. He presents her to Alan.

BRADLEY

Russel Thompson? He must have been an out-of-stater who came up fast. Still I've been gone a long while. . . . Yes, it's entirely possible—a good man could start and finish in that interval. You know, I believe this Jim fellow has taken kind-of-a shine to Miss Harriet. . . . I wish Martha would turn with her profile to this Jim. Martha never did look her best full in the face. Martha inadvertently turns sideways as she converses with Mrs. Tucker. That's better don't you think? I guess Jim just isn't much for looking around. As Mrs. Willowby completes her exchange of words with Audry, she joins Mrs. Tucker and Martha in a group forming in the left rear stage area. Harriet utters her pleasing remarks, first to Alan, then to Audry. Jim returns to the doorway where one unannounced lady remains near Sam.

SAM

Raises a reference card to eye-level. Mista sec-'tary White will 'scort Miss Catherine Ann Grundy to speak with de Gubb-'nah and Miss' Hilltop. Miss Catherine am de daughtah ob Gubb-'nah Bruce Grundy. When she lived heah ah served her meals and snacks so many times ah's lost de count. Jim escorts Catherine to the receiving line. As she concludes formalities with Alan and Audry, two standing discussion groups are formed. One group is composed of Mrs. Tucker, Audry, Martha and Jim. The other includes Catherine, Mrs. Willowby, Harriet and Alan. Sam, with the reference cards in hand, leaves the room.

BRADLEY

Martha Coleman Riley certainly takes after the Coleman side, don't you think? I shouldn't have said that. There I go, giving away my name. I'll bet you were thinking an odd fellow like me must be her other grandfather. No—I am Governor Coleman. Now that I've said what I wasn't going to, I may as well admit the rest. For all practical purposes, I've been dead quite a spell. I expect, unless things have changed a lot lately, I've lost a good many of you as friends by telling you. I know how it was in my day. A fellow would die—and folks would start right away to get along without him. But confidentially, I can hardly tell you how it pleases me to see Martha over there. That conniving Philip Bacon used to hold her interest too much to suit me. Now, if you'll all be real quiet, I want to listen and get anything that may be said about her current prospects. Bradley sits down to observe. He occupies a chair to the extreme front and left of the stage. The voices of characters progressively become plainly audible then become a chattering babble. The chatter subsides as the two groups close to a half circle assembly in center stage. The characters edge closer to the footlights. Quiet ensues except for Alan's voice—now distinct.

ALAN

Now really, Miss Riley, I had no idea that you and General Philip Bacon used to be sweethearts.

MARTHA

You put it too strongly, Governor Richardson. Philip and I were never really engaged. I suppose that every girl who ever went with him looks back on the affair now as being glamorous. It is still hard to believe that Philip has become the nation's leading general of our time.

AUDRY

Miss Riley, my son, Sylvester, was what I believe his companions called a Dogface in the front lines. I can assure you that Sylvester saw no glamour in General Bacon.

ALAN

I readily see Sylvester's point. I was an apprentice seaman during my period of service.

MRS. TUCKER

But Governor Richardson, whether the General is glamorous or not, we can't discount all the chatter in the papers. They say he has considered resigning his post abroad to run for President.

JIM

That is an interesting contemplation. Now had this prospective romance developed, Martha might have been in line to become the next First Lady.

ALAN

Jim, until we know the General is an advocate of our party, let's not speak of the Presidential household in his connection.

AUDRY

Now, now Governor, and Mr. White. Remember our little agreement that no politics is to be discussed this afternoon?

ALAN

You're quite right, Mrs. Hilltop. Let's say merely that we are all fascinated by the early bond between one of the state's fairest daughters and one of the nation's well decorated militarists.

CATHERINE

I think men look their very best in uniform. When Ralph—he's my boy friend—told me he was going to join the marines, I told him I could hardly wait to see him in his uniform. He got real fussy then and he wouldn't join anything—not even the army. Sometimes I don't think they would have made Ralph a general anyway.

MRS. WILLOWBY

I do wish my husband, Governor Willowby, had felt up to coming today. Harvey was personally acquainted with all the higher-ups in the services. You know he used to belong to their Property Procurement Board. He could help Ralph get nicely situated in one of the branches.

CATHERINE

That would be awfully nice of him, Mrs. Willowby. Just the same I would rather think about it more before I push Ralph into something. I keep reading about the fraternizing of servicemen and foreign people and I wouldn't want Ralph to get an accent or a beard or sea-legs or anything.

HARRIET

My mother told me that when her father, Governor Thompson, —only he wasn't governor yet, came back from the navy, he had a picture of that Little Egypt dancer right on his chest. My grandmother made him get an American flag tattooed right over Little Egypt. Years later he started swimming at the same club where all the politicians swam. Mother thinks that tattooed flag was what inspired them to run granddaddy for Governor.

ALAN

Jim, remind me to make an appointment with the local tattoo artist before we schedule any campaign beach appearances. **Sam reenters and stands near the door.**

JIM

Certainly, Alan. And I think the design of the great seal of the state would be most appropriate.

ALAN

And the prestige of the seal may help me to make friends with the porpoises. I may need them to push my blubber away from the sharks. The legislators are constantly threatening to make me walk the plank. **Sam covers his eyes and shakes his head.**

AUDRY

Governor, our conversation keeps swerving dangerously close to the borderline of politics.

ALAN

So it does. What do you suggest, Jim?

JIM

Well, if all objections are over-ruled, let's go into the music room. No one will have to prod me into leading in singing a few oldies. There's been a lot of singing in this mansion through the years. When is there a better time and where is there a better crowd to bring those melodies back? **Babble returns and rises as the smiling guests start for the door. As they pass, Sam walks to the rear of the stage near the right end of the table. Alan lingers alone in the center of the room. Jim pauses at the door and the crowd quiets before he calls a question. Aren't you keeping us company, Governor?**

ALAN

I'll be detained a moment. Count on me joining you a little later.

AUDRY

Pointing finger. Now, that's a promise. Bradley rises and walks to the table near Sam.

BRADLEY

It's good to see Sam, although I guess he can't see or hear me. His father was of invaluable service to me, often serving me right in this room. As the last member of the exiting group passes from sight, Alan turns and walks directly to Bradley. Alan puts out his hand.

ALAN

I recall your face, sir—but the name has slipped for the moment. Sam becomes alarmed and rushes to Alan. He taps Alan's shoulder.

SAM

Ah begs ya pardon Mista Gubb-'nah boss. Ah am Sam, ya butlah.

ALAN

To Bradley. Pardon me. To Sam. Of course, Sam. Now why don't you go out to the kitchen and bring in the punch? As Sam leaves, he turns and glances back questioningly.

BRADLEY

I'm Bradley Coleman. I preceded you by quite a few administrations. I must apologize for I am not really a guest.

ALAN

Bradley Coleman, of course, of course. A mansion occupant of your distinction, a man who gave a lifetime of service to the state, could never be a guest. You are a returned tenant—and the hospitality of the mansion is yours.

BRADLEY

That's very decent of you, Governor. Particularly since you must know I belong to a party your friend Jim never took stock in. I presume you and Jim share views in regard to political party.

ALAN

Voice lowered. Don't let Mrs. Hilltop in the next room hear us mention political parties. I gave her my solemn promise no politics would be talked this afternoon. Piano strains of music composed by Carrie Jacobs Bond, popular during many previous administrations, comes softly from offstage right. It originates from a mixed chorus with Jim's voice (or reasonable substitution) most prominent.

BRADLEY

That's a bargain, Governor. I'll talk no more politics today.

ALAN

Now, let me accompany you into the music room. Your granddaughter, Martha Riley, is in there. Would it be presumptuous if I assumed you haven't seen Martha for a long while?

BRADLEY

You are quite right, Governor. Until tonight I hadn't seen Martha since she was quite a young lady, seriously disturbing my thoughts with an ill-chosen romance. . . . But what you don't know Governor, is that Martha has no eyes equal to my image. It seems that only a Governor can see a Governor—beyond the grave. I was uncertain until a moment ago whether you could see me. You know how it is. . . . We all have to go sometime.

ALAN

I know, Bradley. Well, I must join the others before they become offended. In your invisible state you are in perfect condition to view the mansion and the party from even the most strategic points. Just make yourself at home. If there is anything I can do for you, come on in and tap me on the shoulder. I truly envy your ability to see without being seen. It would be a most admirable quality for any man in the public eye.

BRADLEY

I certainly appreciate your kind assistance, Governor. You go on. I'll make out all right. I'll just look around a bit. Then I'll be getting on back.

ALAN

Since you threaten to leave without letting me see you off, I'll say Good-bye now. **Puts out hand.** Do come back, whenever. . . . well, whenever you can get away.

BRADLEY

Shakes Alan's hand. It has been so good to talk with you, Governor. There is one thing you can do for me. Try to make Martha forget that General Philip Bacon.

ALAN

Don't worry about General Bacon. He has been married for years—and has a family. I'm sure any attraction he has for Martha now is purely hero worship.

BRADLEY

It's good to hear that, Governor Richardson. Perhaps you can help steer her into a proper romance.

ALAN

That should be a pleasure, Governor. Good-bye now. Alan raises his hand in a parting hail and leaves the room. Sam enters. He carries a tray which supports a punch bowl and several glasses. He lets his voice harmonize with the singing in the other room while he arranges the bowl and glasses

on the table. Bradley walks to the end of the table and peers at the bowl and its contents. Jim appears in the doorway.

JIM

We'll soon be coming in here, Sam. Maybe it would be well to set up about eight glasses.

SAM

Interrupts his chorusing with the distant group. Eight glasses,—right away, suh. Jim turns around and leaves. Sam picks up one glass and pours a dainty serving. He puts the glass down on the table. He picks up another glass and pours to the same level. Bradley picks up the first, drinks the contents and replaces the empty glass to the table. Sam picks up a third glass. Bradley drinks the contents of the second. The third glass is filled just as Bradley replaces the second glass empty to the table. Sam doesn't quite set the third glass down. He lifts it high into the air, to conspicuously examine the bottom. The singing in the other room stops. Sam starts the melody over alone in a loud solo as he finally places the third glass on the table. Chattering voices are heard near the doorway as the guests approach the dining room. Sam lets his own singing voice die out. He hurries toward the doorway. Jim and Audry meet him in the doorway, blocking his way.

SAM

Ya'suh, Mista sec-'tary boss. Ah's jess fixin' to start fillin' de eight glasses. Bradley returns to the chair in the extreme left foreground of the stage. Sam fills the glasses with punch although he is visibly nervous and shaken. Governor (Bradley) Coleman's ghostly face breaks into a beaming smile as Martha and Alan come through the door, arm in arm. Still registering facial and pantomime approval, Bradley rises and crosses the front of the stage towards the right. Before exiting he pauses for a remark to the audience.

BRADLEY

It's pretty obvious that Martha has a wholesome interest in life. . . . That's what I have wanted to see. . . . And now I'm overdue. So I'll just say So Long and be on my way. Exits. The guests stand near the table, annoyed by Sam's uneasiness. Conversation, if less sparse, is still strained.

SAM

Speaks after pouring the glasses—to Alan. Mista Gubb-'nah boss, ah's had a hard, tired day. And ah's jess wonderin' if dis here party ain't jess 'bout to fizzle itself out.

ALAN

Sam, whatever makes you say such a thing before guests?

SAM

Aw, nothin', ah 'spose. But if ah could be 'scused ah'd most positively be the humblest and gratefulest butlah ya eber had.

ALAN

If there is some reason so terribly important, Sam, you may go. But I will expect you with my breakfast as usual.

SAM

Ya'suh Mista Gubb-'nah boss. Starts towards the door. Thank ya, suh. Rebecca enters, impeding Sam's exit.

REBECCA

Oh such a day, such a day! All the cares of the state fall to the Commissioner of Civil Service. If only the code didn't so limit the hours of my staff. Saturday is my one day to shop and take in social occasions—but when overtime duty comes, I am the only one eligible to stay. . . . Sam, won't you pour a glass of punch for me?

SAM

Ah begs to be 'scused, Miss Winters—fo' ah's jess startin' to assume a pow-'ful needed rest. Goes closer to the door but still hesitates.

ALAN

To the guests. Help yourself to the punch, everyone. Sam has left us on our own.

JIM

Don't worry about Sam, Miss Winters. I'll pour your punch. Rebecca smiles as she slithers toward the table and Jim.

REBECCA

Oh—Mr. White. You're always looking after poor little me. I do love punch so. It sometimes makes me want to turn hand-springs. Sam throws up his arms protectively and starts back into the room—then he goes excitedly and quickly out.

ACT II.—Scene 2.

Two days later, a Monday evening.

A spacious dining room in the Governor's mansion.

Hal and Gene are seated on two of several straight chairs against the wall. They are in the stage area left of the center table. As always they wear hats.

HAL

I say this is the acid test for the Governor. If he swings a few opposition legislators now, he'll be re-elected.

GENE

We can't be sure he's out of the national scene. A Governor is always a Presidential possibility.

HAL

Presidential? You know the Vice-Presidency is no snap to shoot for. Be reasonable.

GENE

I said Presidency. . . . Have you read the out of state papers?

HAL

I read your column and my column. . . . That's sickening enough. When I'm through with them, I'm ready to turn out the lights and go to sleep.

GENE

Listen, Wag, you've been asleep for ages. Readers over your way think the state has done away with the Capitol.

HAL

Oh, I make allowances,—every column has its ups and downs.

GENE

Downs, yes, but there has to be a bottom. . . . Yesterday's Capitol Comments by Hal Jeffrey—a big story about squirrels. . . . Mind you, a nest of long tailed squirrels!

HAL

Okay, okay. . . . Anyway those were squirrels on the Capitol lawn. **Jim enters from the right.**

GENE

Any copy like that by me will be saved up for the day I may want a quick ticket to the home office.

JIM

If you ask me, it's the columnists who muddle the issues.

HAL

You weren't asked, Jim. This is strictly a conflag on the new-school.

JIM

Always the new-school. Tonight I get another taste of it. At 8:00 o'clock the engineer from the broadcasting company will be here with his film and sound track. **Sam comes into the room. He removes the table cover, folds and puts it away in the cabinet. He tidies the chair alignment.**

GENE

I agree with Jim, for once. Tape and film, that's all anybody gets these days. The real thing would seem like a ghost.

SAM

Don't say dat word, Mista boss repo-'tah. Eber since de Saturday party, ah's jumped eber time de door's rattled.

HAL

Jim, what is this Saturday ghost business? Everyone hints about it. No one will talk about it.

JIM

It was nothing at all, Hal. Sam mixed and sampled the fruit punch at a little gathering the Governor had. It did Sam in.

SAM

Next time dere's nothin' at all doin', ah hopes ah gets gone—eben sooner. A knock at the door summons the tense Sam to the other room.

HAL

It looks like there's no ghost story for us. Hope the Governor gives with some copy when the broadcast comes off. **Sam and a caller appear briskly at the door. The engineer is carrying a heavy case with his right hand and a small case swung on a shoulder belt. A folded tripod extends ungainly fore and back from his left hand. With an abrupt hand gesture, Sam indicates the room is the proper one and then leaves the guest unattended.**

JIM

Give me some credit for what I do around here. The Governor speaks, if and when, I introduce him. **Sam returns with a water pitcher and glass. He puts them near the center of the table.**

HAL

Okay. . . . Quotes Capitol Comments tomorrow. . . . The whatsit introduced the whosit.

JIM

Observing the engineer. Oh, hello, sir. Do you need any assistance with your equipment? **Sam moves a chair from the wall to the table's far side.**

JOHN

Thank you. I have it all right here. . . . May I set up now?

JIM

The room's yours. We'll try and keep out of your way.

JOHN

Don't worry about getting into John Howard's way. Even crowds don't cut in badly on shows like this. **John sets up a tripod near the footlights in center stage. He opens the large case on the floor near the doorway. The opened case reveals a sound recorder. He removes a based table mi-**

crophone from the case. Carefully extending a cord from the recorder, he places the microphone on the dining table.

GENE

What time is this momentous message scheduled for airing?

JIM

You two newsmen—so-called—should feel distinctly honored. We're going to record now and the public gets it at 10:00 o'clock. You can take notes on the spot. Sam walks to a place near the door. From there he idly watches John complete his equipment installation.

GENE

Honored? Then how come the advance mimeos to every wag?

HAL

We're honored if the Governor starts ad libing. John switches on the bright ceiling lights. He takes a motion picture camera from the case suspended on his shoulder belt. He mounts the camera on the tripod and positions and focuses it. He takes a small light meter from the case and reads it quickly. He makes a final camera adjustment. He returns to the door and switches the lights to normal.

JOHN

We're set up. Whenever the Governor is ready, we may go ahead.

JIM

Sam, won't you tell Governor Richardson that the stage is set?

SAM

Ya'suh Mista sec-'tary boss. Sam leaves the room.

JIM

I believe, Hal, that I can safely say that there will be no ad lib on this show. There is too much at stake at this point in the administration to play impromptu angles.

GENE

I'm afraid, Jim, that you aren't holding the Governor in line to the old-school philosophy. It used to be that the people heard from the Governor only at election time. Now, a little dissention comes along at the Capitol—and bingo, he goes right to the people.

JIM

This Governor is his own schoolmaster. He switches from the old-school to the new-school and back again . . . at will.

HAL

Good for him—as long as he makes copy. Sam returns, followed closely by Alan. Sam stops near the doorway. Governor Richardson walks directly to the table. He sits on the chair Sam placed at the table. The microphone on the table is between him and the audience. John switches the ceiling lights (floor lights rise too) to bright. He stoops to adjust the recorder. He rises, clicks the camera and returns to the controls on the recorder. He lifts a single small receiver to his right ear.

JOHN

You are on, Governor. . . . You may begin. Jim pulls one of the chairs from the wall to Alan's left in the right center portion of the table. Alan hands him the top page of the script. Jim sits in a position that twists his body right in order to place his lips near and in the direction of the microphone. Sam stands in the right rear corner of the stage out of camera range.

JIM

Reading. My fellow citizens of our great state. Waiting to bid you welcome is your beloved senior executive and mine—Governor Alan Richardson. Quickly hands Alan the sheet of script from which he read.

ALAN

Reading. My friends and fellow citizens. . . . I am not omniscient. There are many of you who are more proficient and more persuasive than I. We are faced with many problems. These problems must be solved. But the conditions of solving them are discouraging. . . . For the past few months, the administration has been mine, the legislature belonging to the opposition. So what? Aren't we all Americans? Haven't we all been sworn to serve the state? Economy isn't our sole problem, nor are the roads, nor is government reorganization, nor are constitution reform or law enforcement. . . . Those things are public necessities, and under leadership of our administration, we in this state can show a worried world that representative government in our state—at least—is healthy, that it is enterprising and that it is awake. . . . Alan reaches for the water pitcher. Jim is quicker and pours a half-filled glass and hands it to Alan. Alan drinks sparingly from the glass and sets it on the table. . . . In our Capitol is recorded the heartbeat of the nation. Here during the few months of my administration that remain, we can still strengthen or weaken self-government by what we do or fail to do. With God's help we can serve a great tradition greatly. I think an anxious people asks no less. Gene and Hal stand and move back of Jim and Alan to a place in right rear stage near Sam.

JIM

As he and Alan rise, clasps Alan's hand. I believe you were right in stride, Governor.

ALAN

Thank you, Jim. If the response is good, then we'll consider the message as right in stride. **Jim follows Alan toward right stage behind the table.**

HAL

Clasping Alan's hand. It hit directly home, Governor.

ALAN

Thank you.

GENE

Shaking Alan's hand. It was right on the button, Governor.

ALAN

Thank you. Leaves the room. John gathers the microphone cord and returns it with the instrument to the case housing the recorder. He dismantles and encases the camera and folds the tripod.

SAM

Ah thought the Gubb-'nah was in sprightly good form.

GENE

Sam's right. It was a great speech.

SAM

He spoke it out jess de way he done while he wielded dat razor—shavin' himself dis mornin' . . . only maybe eben bettah.

JIM

That's what I keep telling you. . . . The Governor has it—what the people want. Anyplace the man wants to go, the ticket is his. **Holds up his rounded pointer-finger and thumb in the okay signal as he leaves.**

GENE

You know, I'm getting soft headed. The way Jim says it, I almost believe it.

HAL

. . . Yeah me, too. John lowers the lights and gathers his equipment.

INTERMISSION

Act III.

SCENE 1

The week preceding the national convention, a Saturday afternoon.

A spacious dining room in the Governor's mansion.

Sam, distressed, enters. Alan and Jim are seated at the table. Alan, at left, is profiled. Jim on far side faces the audience.

SAM

Standing between the door and table. Mista Gubb-'nah boss, isn't ya eber goin' to answer de telephone when de state chairman rings up de mansion number? Ah's done jess told him again, and ah 'spects he 'spects ya am right heah.

JIM

These are unusual times, Sam. For the present, won't you continue to answer the phone? And for the present, the Governor can receive no calls from the state chairman.

SAM

Ya'suh Mista sec-'tary boss. But ah's got to keep mah tongue in mah cheek, and sooner or later ah's 'fraid it am gonna get bit.

ALAN

Perturbed. It's thanks to you, Jim, with the national convention practically started in the metropolis of this state—I, the honorably elected Governor, must sit behind drawn shades in the mansion like a cornered fox in his den.

JIM

For the inconvenience of the moment, I mourn you as the martyr of the hour. But, Alan, as the man our party will pick next week to run against Philip Bacon, I salute you as the President-to-be.

ALAN

Jim, let's come down to earth. With one execption, until the other day, no one but Jim White wanted Governor Alan Richardson to set foot in the White House. I've told you ten thousand times, if I've told you once, that the only time I ever wanted to go there was when I was a kid. It was Easter morning and they were having the egg hunt on the south lawn. The phone rings offstage right. Sam, talking aloud, leaves.

SAM

Dat ringin' gets to soundin' like de general alarm on de First National, and when ah takes off de re-see-bah dat chairman's voice am g'wonna boom in mah ear like de voice ob doom done gone rampagin.' Disappears out of hearing.

JIM

It's an easy campaign for you to pull out of—if that's what you want, Alan. They want a candidate who is different.

ALAN

And so we played our shots in reverse. Now they're convinced I am the man who is different.

JIM

We can play it straight. Then they won't want you.

ALAN

Oh, yes—I can renounce that ridiculous memorandum you had credited to me and the state chairman will welcome me back with open arms.

JIM

Sure, and why not?

ALAN

The hitch is that I want to be elected Governor for another four years.

JIM

Renouncing the memorandum does what to re-election?

ALAN

Remember the people—Jim—the people. They don't want a Governor who says something one day and reverses it the next.

JIM

I'm sorry, Alan. I got you into it. I was sure that the Presidency was what you really wanted. I thought you just wouldn't admit it to yourself.

ALAN

Well, if making me the dark horse who is different is your objective, Jim, you will get your medal for genius—provided of course that I can get out of hiding long enough to hand out any medals. Sam returns to the room and waits cautiously to get Jim's attention.

JIM

I have it! Issue a clarification of the memorandum—even a partial reversal. That should appease the state chairman and dampen the interest he has stirred on the convention scene.

SAM

Mista sec-'tary boss. Mista White. . . . Mista Jim, ah says . . .

JIM

Continuing without answering Sam. To the public, clarification is hog wash. It goes in one ear and out the other. Alan, you would be right back where you say you want—into the Governor's seat and out of the Presidency.

SAM

Mista sec-'tary boss.

JIM

Yes, Sam. Was that the state chairman?

SAM

Na'suh. Dat was de girl who does ya typin' ovah at de Capitol. She say all de Gubb-'nah's cabinet done left fo' de national convention. They am cheering fo' Mista Gubb-'nah Richardson fo' President—she say.

ALAN

That does it. Even my own cabinet is convinced this state has to have a new Governor. They are willing to sacrifice me to the White House. It means that much to them to have my idealistic notions out of their way. Sam walks to the right rear of the stage and sits down on a straight chair already placed against the wall.

JIM

It's just the state chairman working on them, Alan. We'll clarify the memorandum and he'll call off his wolf pack. Pauses and searches among the papers on the table before him. He lifts one. Here's your memorandum as I put it out. You're talking, Alan. . . . It has come to my attention that some state employees under my jurisdiction are doing personnel work at the state central committee headquarters. While I fully appreciate that personnel recruitment, call it patronage or what you will, is a necessary function that must be performed well—I disapprove assigning secretaries from their departments to the state committee offices to do it. . . . Now, Alan, I would clarify it by saying . . .

ALAN

Interrupting. Hold it, Jim. That won't be necessary. Those cabinet men are no better politicians than I am. They couldn't any more get me nominated for President than I could get one of them nominated. They and the state chairman and I are all small timers in the national swing. What are we worrying about anyway?

SAM

Stands up. Ya means dat ya am gonna start answering de telephone Mista Gubb-'nah boss?

ALAN

Turning to Sam. You may pack my bags. I am leaving for the convention tonight. And, as of now, I am taking any and all phone calls. **Brings attention back to Jim.** The record stands as you and I have written it.

JIM

You are making a wise decision, Alan.

ALAN

Come Presidency, come Governorship, I'm glad to be the one party man who is considered idealistically different. . . . Between you and me, I believe I'll be coming back here to campaign for re-election. **Alan and Jim stand. Jim makes an unhurried effort to straighten the stack of papers on the table.**

SAM

Ya'suh Mista Gubb-'nah boss, ah'll pack. And ah wants you to know ah's fo' ya fo' Gubb-'nah provided 'course ya hab really decided what ya really am runnin' fo'.

ACT III—SCENE 2.

The week of the national convention, a Friday evening.

A spacious dining room in the Governor's mansion.

Benjy, wearing a cap, and Sam, in house attire, walk leisurely into the room. Benjy is carrying a large stack of telegrams.

SAM

Ah's been meanin' to show ya 'round heah. **Stands with Benjy in the center of the room except when cautiously calling attention to the mansion show pieces.** Right now ah's jess 'bout in charge heah.

BENJY

Looking about. The farther in you go, the better it looks.

SAM

Dat picture . . . **Points . . .** was done done by de artist's own hands. And dem dishes in de cabinet am hand painted.

BENJY

That's just about as swell as they can get, I expect.

SAM

And de carpet don't wear out so fast back heah—but de air gets jess 'bout as dusty. What ah really needs am a dustin' assistant.

BENJY

Running fingers along the table. I don't see any dust.

SAM

Dat's 'cause ah 'eliminates de dust jess as soon as it circles fo' de landin.'

BENJY

It's a good thing they keep people like you and me around. We get things done. I want to tell you something. **In spite of their deserted surroundings, looks both ways and assumes a confidential tone.** If it wasn't for brains like ours, this whole state and country would probably be falling apart.

SAM

Ya'suh Mista Benjy. Ya sho' do say de truth. . . . Ah's beginnin' to wish though dat de folk's would be a-comin' back from de convention. It can get pau-'ful lonesome 'round heah.

BENJY

That's one thing I don't get—lonesome. Wherever I go there's usually people. I take these . . . **lifts stack of telegrams . . .** where the address says. That's my job. Folks sign if they're there. They don't sign if they aren't. Most generally they are there—or someone is.

SAM

Ya wants mah signa-'ture fo' all dem, does ya? **Benjy hands Sam the pad and pencil.**

BENJY

Right on that line. **Takes the telegrams to the table and lays the signature pad just to the right of the stack.**

SAM

Dat line right dere?

BENJY

That's it. **Sam moves back of the table to Benjy's right. Without sitting, he bends forward and slowly signs the pad. He hands the pad back to Benjy.** Guess I'd better be getting on now. Thanks for showing me around.

SAM

Das alright. Ah'll show ya de way back to de door.

BENJY

You needn't bother. I know the way now. . . . See you later, Sam. **Leaves. Sam draws back a chair from the table and sits down. He faces right stage. He runs his fingers curiously through the individually enveloped telegrams. After a brief interlude of silence, Benjy rushes back into the room and to where Sam sits. Sam, there's a lot of people outside! It's sort of a parade. They have banners and are gathering into a crowd.**

SAM

Stands quickly, then pauses. Dis, ah's gonna see! . . . Ya know what dat Gubb-'nah boss hab done done. Ah figgers he's likely got hisself runnin'

fo' President. . . . And he's jess got de Gubb-'nah job workin' to a good lathah. Sam and Benjy start quickly for the door.

ACT III—SCENE 3.

The next to last week before the general election, a Tuesday morning.

The Governor's office quarters in the Capitol.

Alan, wearing his hat, is seated at Jim White's desk.

ALAN

Holds the phone loosely to his right ear. Hello Jim. . . . I've just come in for a day between speeches. . . . Jim, I've borrowed your stenographer to keep minutes at a cabinet meeting. It's in progress now. I have to get down there. . . . The wags haven't yet caught wind that I'm in town. . . . Sure they will—so perhaps you had better get over here and hold the fort. I'll leave the door open, hoping any amblers come in here instead of the cabinet room. . . . Okay, and Jim, bring along any bills that need my veto. . . . Yes, I know they call me the veto Governor. . . . Okay, I'll be here to see you as soon as I can leave the cabinet members. So long, Jim. Places the phone in the cradle. A rhythmic knock is heard at the door. Come in. Come in. Hal and Gene, wearing hats, come in. Alan takes his hat off and holds it in his right hand.

HAL

This Presidential campaign is keeping you humping, isn't it Governor? Hal and Gene stand slightly back and right of Jim's desk where Alan is seated. They half face the audience and face Alan almost directly.

ALAN

It isn't the Presidency that has me humping. It's this time-demanding Governorship. No one has elected me President. But the people of this state have elected me Governor and I try to make them a good one. Now time is running out, and above all else I do want to finish what I've started.

GENE

Haven't you been leaning pretty heavy on the veto pen?

ALAN

That might not be an unreasonable interpretation.

HAL

Would you say the vetoes are to spite the legislature?

ALAN

Spite would definitely not be my word. We all have axes to grind this year and it just happens that the constitution says the Governor can swing the axe last.

HAL

Then we might say you intend to lay your axe with a hefty swing.

ALAN

You might say that. Lately I've noticed that the press has held very little in reserve that might be said about me. But let's look at those vetoes. . . . I vetoed the 400 thousand dollar approach to the river at Rockland. I vetoed the 14 and a half million dollar bill for six new bridges. Why? Would you say to spite the legislature? Look at my past statements. . . . You know I have repeatedly expressed my conviction that special highway and bridge appropriations are bad in principle—certain segments of the state are favored at the expense of the long-range over-all highway program. . . . Now in order that I may be no later for an appointment I've made, I wonder if you pressmen will do me a favor.

HAL

You can bet on it, Governor.

GENE

For a next President, certainly. **Alan stands and moves to right stage. He places his hat on a high spike on the floor based tree.**

ALAN

Then watch that hat until I get back. Jim may be in before I'm back. You can toss questions to him for a while. **Leaves. Hal and Gene walk right—across the stage—and occupy the two end chairs in the row against the right wall.**

GENE

Here I am, the Capitol correspondent for the hometown newspaper of the Governor—the Presidential nominee—the wizard. What do I do? I watch the wizard's hat!

HAL

You have good company. The political writer for the metropolitan daily does likewise.

GENE

You know, Hal, there is something Governor Alan Richardson has that most politicians don't have.

HAL

If you ask me, he has a good many extra-curricular qualities—a conscience, he's hard-driving with himself but not with others, and he has humility.

GENE

Hard-driving, sure, but humility is the quality for the people. It isn't acquired for the campaign. It's real. I recall his inaugural speech when the

victory for the Governorship was solidly in the bag. He said in that speech that he was only the instrument through which the people of the state expressed their desires.

HAL

And Gene, he's just about been the effective instrument.

GENE

He's done alright. It isn't every first term Governor who gets himself nominated for President. **Jim hustles into the office from the corridor. He is carrying a heavily packed briefcase. He lays the briefcase on a chair adjacent to the desk and places his hat on top. He moves to the center of the stage and faces Gene and Hal.**

JIM

Well, you two news-birds appear mighty comfy to be covering the busiest state Capitol news-breaking pageant the country has ever witnessed.

GENE

Yea . . . only we're watching a hat.

JIM

That shouldn't be difficult for a pair who always keep their hats on. You can each watch the others.

HAL

You missed the kick. This is a very special hat.

GENE

Shrugging hand and shoulder towards the tree. Yeah—the Governor parked this one.

JIM

Biting words. It just happens that I'm going to be around here a while. There will be no further need for you to keep your multitudes of readers waiting. I'll watch the big sparkling political ring . . . as well as the battered hat that tumbled in.

HAL

Offer received and appreciated, Jim. No dice. We find these straight chairs too comfortable. **Jim picks up a chair near the wall and places it in the center area room facing between the position of Hal and Gene and the position of the audience.**

JIM

You modern news mugs make me sick. . . . I spent twenty-eight years on a news beat—besides the time I spent in knee pants—and you two would never believe how it was in those days. It was seven editions every twenty-

four hours. We had desk men with shoes spiked at the toes. Mine wore a derby hat over his horns.

HAL

He's started his post-graduate review of the old-school, Gene. Shall we leave?

GENE

No, just pull your graduation mortar-board down over your eyes. We'll sleep this reminiscing fest out. **Hal and Gene extend their feet well in front of the chairs and tip their hats forward over their eyes. They fold their arms and relax.**

JIM

A leg man dug for news, carried a camera, a powder flask for inside flash shots, his pocketful of goodwill dimes—and they came from his own small salary, and he carried the usual pads and pencils. . . . I'll never forget the night Green Eyes—he was my desk man—told me to get a scoop for the 7:45. The sun was about to come up on a city election day and Mayor Argatillo was a cinch for re-election. **Jim stands and walks forward and then back to the chair. He stands behind the chair.** Green Eyes wanted no ordinary scoop. He sent me out to get a bighter, a yarn that would set the voters back on their haunches and beat Argatillo. For this I was getting peanuts, but those days there was no coasting in the game—it was either up or out. I was scared stiff.

HAL

Lifts his hat brim momentarily. Until you got scared stiff I thought maybe you were the hound in this hound and rabbit chase.

JIM

For years Argatillo had grabbed all the breaks. He made the Governors. He stacked the courts. He told Washington what the state—as well as the city—would or wouldn't do. He was kingpin like no one has been since. . . . So I hustled to city hall. I knew a few wiseacres around there and I nudged this particular elevator man—Scotty. Scotty had unloaded a yarn to me once. **Jim turns his chair around and places his folded hands on the chair back. He sits astraddle almost directly facing Gene and Hal.** This time he rode me to the fourth and motioned me off into the dark hallway. Then confidential, like I'm talking to you, he told me how things were with Judge Riley and the mayor. Then I telephoned Green Eyes.

HAL

You mean the telephone had been invented when you were a typewriter pup?

GENE

Don't tax the old-school's memory for details, Hal. Either sleep or improvise.

JIM

Well, Green Eyes was as crisp as a stalk of celery when he heard my voice. He was sure I had fizzled.

HAL

Sounds to me like you have.

JIM

Do you call a twenty percent plurality of all the votes fizzling? I gave Green Eyes the story like this. . . . Argatillo, with an assist from Riley, plans to clamp the tax-spread over every church property and private school property in the city. The ordinance is drawn for presentation and is slated for passage a week after the election. Riley is set to stall an expected appeal for months or years. . . . Green Eyes was still crisp when he told me: We'll print it if you can prove it. . . . That's where I clinched it. Scotty sneaked a copy of the proposed ordinance and a note from Riley to Argatillo.—This note was on the judge's letterhead, mind you. The note put the deal into plain type with the judge's initials accompanying. It made the 7:45 alright and every edition that day—with a four-column engraver's blow-up of the note.

HAL

And Jimmy Boy did it all with his little noggin between the first and fourth floor.

GENE

What happened to Argatillo?

JIM

An impromptu telephone campaign that morning, put him out of the running. A bishop with a host of private schools on the string organized telephone committees like clockwork. They were superbly effective against Argatillo's henchmen. The last I heard of him, Argatillo had moved out of the city and out of the state. Riley finished out his term but didn't get another. **Rebecca precedes Alan into the room from the corridor.**

REBECCA

Turns around as she enters. You know Governor, I would be the last person in the state to try and tell you how to run your office, but we have our Civil Service rules, and they must apply without exception.

ALAN

But I've been assured, Miss Winters, that Mr. White's stenographer has been employed in full compliance with the Civil Service code. **Jim steps nearer Alan.**

JIM

My stenographer? Has something happened?

ALAN

Nothing that Miss Winters can't quickly rectify. Now Jim, I'm going into my office and when . . . No, it's best if you and Miss Winters go in my office and settle this stenographic problem. While you are in there, Jim, I'll use your desk. **Jim rises and admits Rebecca to Alan's office and closes the door. Alan seats himself at Jim's desk.**

HAL

Rising. It looks like even a widower can feel the ire of a woman's tongue. . . . Is there a yarn in Jim's secretarial debacle? **Gene rises. Gene carries his chair near Jim's desk. Hal carries the chair Jim left in the center floor area and places it beside Gene's chair. Alan's profile is to the audience. Hal and Gene are facing the audience.**

ALAN

I guess it's better copy than some your rivals turn in sometimes. Although the matter impresses me as rather minor, it seems that Jim's stenographer is grade three on the Civil Service books. I just asked her this morning to fill in for a while taking notes on the proceedings at the cabinet meetings. . . . Miss Winters very ably informed me that only stenographers of grade five or higher may take such proceedings. It seems the Governor was in error.

GENE

Since the Governor has managed to get himself nominated for President, I move that we keep his error a big dark secret.

HAL

Ata-boy Gene. I'm with you. . . . Now Governor, we are considering saying you lay your axe with a hefty swing in the state. If we say that, would it be safe to predict you would do the same with congress if elected President? **Hal and Gene take pads and pencils from their suitcoat pockets.**

ALAN

Decidedly not. . . Now, if you want a yarn, put down these reasons to the contrary. **Alan looks from Hal to Gene to make sure they take notes.** The greatest concern in government today is the migration of power from the local level to higher levels. This state, and the many states, must more and more come to discharge given duties unassisted. . . . State problems handled at state level promote sound economy. Then and only then does the taxpayer's dollar travel the shortest path from purpose to accomplishment.

HAL

That makes sense to me, Governor. But let's assume that your opponent takes the view of pushing power from the local level to the higher level. Assume he's lucky. Assume he gets in the White House. Then what comes?

ALAN

You newsmen must lay awake nights thinking out problematical eventualities . . . Now, first of all, I can't speak for my opponent. What he thinks are his thoughts. What I think are my thoughts. . . . Secondly, I can't conceive of my opponent being lucky if he is elected. He would have to spend four years answering questions that are ambiguous and unfair. . . . But, if I'm not too far afield, I would like to put down the human cycle that has endured for all time. . . . The cycle runs like this—from slavery to freedom—from freedom to luxury—from luxury to indifference—and from indifference back to slavery.

HAL

And Governor, just where on the cycle would you say we are now?

ALAN

I believe we are on the late end of the luxury lap.

HAL

And would you propose to stretch the lap?

ALAN

Not only to stretch it, but to build it longer . . . longer and longer, justly and prudently with solid stuff, and to fervently hope that our stockpile of solid stuff doesn't run out. **Gene stands, with pencil and notebook still in hand, and takes a step towards Alan.**

GENE

You know Governor, I believe some of the writers have you all wrong when they call you the candidate who talks over people's heads. This makes a lot of sense to me. . . . If you get a moment, read my column tomorrow. Maybe you'll think better of the press deal you're getting.

ALAN

I'm not worrying about your column, Gene, or yours Hal. If all the other dailies were carrying either of your columns, I'm quite sure the odds wouldn't remain two to one against me—for long. **Rebecca leaves the inner office, followed by Jim. Gene sits down again.**

REBECCA

We should all be so proud of you, Mr. White. No matter what the situation is, you know exactly how to handle it. I'm just so relieved. Why, I believe I could actually turn handsprings.

JIM

You are quite welcome, Miss Winters, but let's wait until after the Governor becomes President-elect before we turn handsprings.

REBECCA

Oh, that would be politics. Remember our Civil Service code, Mr. White. . . . I must get back now. Our whole procedure gets jostled a little when I step out.

JIM

Quite so, Miss Winters. Call again.

ALAN

I have to hand it to you, Jim. You know how to handle Miss Capitol. How did you do it this time? **Jim walks toward his desk where Alan is seated. He stands a few feet away.**

JIM

Simple . . . simple . . . I just opened my big trap.

ALAN

Well, tell me about it.

JIM

It's a habit that's going to put me to punching a typewriter for the next six days.

ALAN

How does that come?

JIM

My stenographer is grade three. She got in bad for doing grade five work this morning. So—bright boy Jimmy—I suggested she be graded up to five. Rebecca agreed and phoned the girl the verdict.

ALAN

Then won't she be back punching your typewriter?

JIM

She would except for the Civil Service rules. The code specifies that grade five stenographers get three weeks' vacation. As a grade three stenographer she had rushed her annual trip into fourteen days.

ALAN

So—

JIM

So, as of five minutes ago, she is starting another week of vacation—I even get to transcribe the cabinet proceedings she took this morning.

ALAN

But, Jim, you can call in a stenographer from one of the departments or bureaus.

JIM

And start the whole vicious circle over. Nothing doing. This is grade five work and she—a new girl—might be grade two. I know when I'm well off.

GENE

You know if there wasn't a Presidential election spacing my punctuation, I believe I would give galley room to your tribulations, Jim.

JIM

Turning to Gene and Hal. Are you news-birds still here? **To Alan.** Governor, I keep wondering what kind of canary seed these birds thrive on. Maybe we could cut their diet so they will fly another direction.

ALAN

To Hal and Gene. Don't mind Jim. When I was a reporter, and the executive secretary gave me trouble, I went to the Governor. If Jim gives you a blank, I want you to rap on that door. **Points.** I'll promise, you won't find it locked. Will that wind it up for now, boys? **Gene and Hal stand.**

GENE

You know Governor, I believe news gathering sort of smooths a fellow out for public office . . . **Looks at Jim** . . . unless he is ball-and-chained to the old school.

HAL

Thanks for the yarn, Governor. . . . Better get up early in the morning, Jim. They tell me that hunt-'n-peck typing can easily run into the night. . . . Governor, if you will look at the wrap tree, you will see your topper intact.

ALAN

So it is. Thanks boys. **Hal and Gene drop their notebooks and pencils in their pockets and leave.**

JIM

Moves his own hat from the chair to the tree rack. Those guys! **Returns to his desk where Alan is still seated, lifts his briefcase from the chair and opens it.** Before I start looking at my notes to type, here are some papers for you to look at. . . . What can we do about the case down at Lakeview?

ALAN

The Provine case?

JIM

Yes. The couple have already kept their daughter out of school for a year and a half. The law says she has to go to school. Their only beef is that no religion is taught in the school.

ALAN

It seems to be the exact reverse of the McCoffee case. Their boy was held from school because religion was included in his course of study.

JIM

We have an ultimate court decision on the McCoffee case. The boy cannot be subjected to denominational instruction. The court backed the McCoffees. But the Provine case is different—it's in court now—and the whole of View county is roiled and the election is only two weeks away.

ALAN

Jim, it may be hard for us, but near or far from election, this administration must lean to policy, not expediency.

JIM

I thought you'd feel that way, Governor. But what shall I tell the Provines and the View county superintendent of schools? The superintendent is of our party—and he's up for re-election.

ALAN

Tell him the Governor is a lawyer. . . . A lawyer respects law and accepts court decisions until they may be reversed by the court or a higher court. Tell the Provines that the Governor has found he is without any legal grounds to authorize religious study for the girl in her school room, but add this. . . . Tell them that the next time Governor Richardson gets down to View county he is going to stop by the Provine home. Tell them if it's agreeable with the parents, he will leave the little girl the same religious book he learned from—back when learning wasn't court supervised.

JIM

Don't explain it any more, Alan. Remember . . . Writes note . . . I'm stenographer this week.

ALAN

That's quite enough to tell them. Now, what's next for my attention?

JIM

Puts the papers back in his briefcase. He pulls another set from the case. Here's something for you, Mr. Attorney. The bar associations want it, aspiring law students want it, and the lobbyists in effective numbers seem to want it. I mean approval of the new law building appropriation for the state university.

ALAN

The building is undoubtedly desirable and worthy. But, wasn't the preference of the university board of trustees for another project?

JIM

Yes, the trustees gave preference to the six million dollar dentistry building. The house and senate sustained them, but both appropriations are authorized in the bill and preferences aren't binding on you.

ALAN

The budget won't stand both. They stated their preference. I'll veto the law building. **Jim hands the pen to Alan who signs the top sheet and returns the papers.**

JIM

Fingering some other material in his briefcase. There seems to be nothing more—that's pressing. When your campaign train crosses the state line, the Lieutenant Governor can come in and sign whatever comes to pressure.

ALAN

But isn't execution of a man scheduled for the north state prison next week? As I recall, at the first trial the jury didn't agree.

JIM

Yes, I believe so. **Still fingers the papers in his briefcase.** I don't seem to have the record on the case here.

ALAN

That's alright, Jim. I'm sitting in with the commerce commission for a few minutes. When I come back, I want the case record. Have it on my desk. Then I want no interruptions before 4:30 while I review it completely.

JIM

Yes sir, I understand.

ALAN

That includes my campaign manager. Any appointments come after 4:30 and my train leaves at 6:00. . . . **At the doorway, Alan turns momentarily to Jim. . . .** When a court action calls for snuffing out the life of a human being, we must never be lax in our scrutiny. **Benjy pushes into the doorway back of Governor Richardson. He is holding a huge stack of telegrams.**

BENJY

Governor Richardson, these telegrams are all for you.

ALAN

Thanks Benjy. May I sign, or do you insist on Mr. White's autograph?

BENJY

The next President's "John Henry" is good enough for me.

ALAN

I have been afraid of appearing new around here.

BENJY

Aw, don't worry about that, Governor. You're getting over that.

ALAN

Signs pad. He takes the stack of telegrams from Benjy. Thanks.

BENJY

I don't even care if you don't give me nothing. . . . Alan reaches in his pocket and hands Benjy a coin. Gee, if you go to Washington you can get all the silver you want, I bet—and paper money too, maybe.

ALAN

I'll have to look into those possibilities. Benjy leaves. Alan carries the telegrams to Jim's desk. To Jim. Most of these people are wishing me success at the polls. It doesn't need to be long, but answer them individually and briefly.

JIM

But Governor, there are still six hundred and 83 of the last ones to answer individually and briefly. Remember, I'm caught between grade three and five.

ALAN

Cheer up, Jim. Six days will go by just like that—and you'll get promoted. If we see worst is coming to worst, we can bust Commissioner Rebecca to grade five momentarily. Then you and your protege can pull the load as a team.

JIM

And lose the Civil Service vote in every state?

ALAN

I have gathered from Miss Winter's comments that Civil Service people would just about as leave be caught at the polls on election day as they would to wind up on the wrong side of the tracks on Judgment Day!

JIM

Don't worry, Governor. Some how, some way, these telegrams will get answered.

ALAN

I knew you could do it, Jim. Leaves.

JIM

Opens and closes some desk drawers and speaks aloud to himself. If over-work ever snuffs out a man's life, I'll bet on him being a Governor's executive secretary. . . . And I used to think the newspaper racket was tough. Green Eyes, where is thy spike?

Act IV.

SCENE 1.

The next New Year's Day.

The Governor's office quarters in the Capitol.

Jim is seated at his desk. His hat hangs on a spike of the floor-based wrap tree. Sam, in a mood of anxiety, stands facing him.

JIM

But if the Governor is well, Sam, what is his condition that has you so worried?

SAM

Mista sec-'tary boss, de Gubb-'nah looks well. He sho' do rest well. But, he ain't so well as he look.

JIM

You needn't be so mysterious, Sam. You can tell me what it is, or whatever you think you observed.

SAM

Well, it started dis mornin' with some tappin' dat oughtn't have been.

JIM

You mean the tapping was unaccounted for?

SAM

Na'suh, not dat way. Ah did de tappin' mahselb . . . but ah oughtn't to hab.

JIM

Why did you tap if you shouldn't?

SAM

It am dis way, Mista sec-'tary boss. De Gubb-'nah told me dis mornin' to tap on de guest room door to 'waken de guest fo' breakfast.

JIM

That seems proper to me.

SAM

But what I should have told you am dat no guest hab checked in at de mansion.

JIM

Well, there are so many guests coming and going there, the Governor probably forgot. These last days in office are trying for him.

SAM

Ya'suh, but he kept right on fo'gettin'. After ah tapped on de guest room door, de Gubb-'nah insisted dat ah set breakfast fo' two.

JIM

Didn't you tell him there was no guest in the guest room?

SAM

Ah hinted at it—but he was so sho' dat ah thought it best to keep de peace 'til after breakfast. Ah set de two places jess like he say.

JIM

Now see here, Sam. If you're making all this up, I'm going to have to make a full report of it to the Governor.

SAM

Ah ain't makin' nothin' up Mista sec-'tary boss. Ah jess carried out de empty plates and dishes ah serbed de Gubb-'nah and de guest who wasn't dere. Den ah left him enjoyin' de company ob who-eber wasn't dere in de parlor and ah hiked ober to consult with ya. **Phone rings. Jim lifts instrument.**

JIM

Hello . . . Oh yes, Governor. . . . Yes, I'll be here. The whole building is very quiet on the holiday. . . . All right, I'll expect you both. . . . Goodbye. **Slowly returns the phone to the cradle and looks up to meet Sam's eyes.** You seem to be quite right in your facts. Governor Richardson and his guest—Governor Bradley Coleman—are leaving the mansion on their way over here.

SAM

Further alarmed. Gubb-'nah Coleman ya say! Ah know 'bout him. He wuh de Gubb-'nah when mah pa was de mansion butlah. Dat am his picture up dere. **Points.** . . . But Gubb-'nah Coleman hab done been dead most ob mah time at de mansion.

JIM

I know. In fact, I went to his funeral—as a newsman, of course. Coleman belonged to the opposition party.

SAM

De new elected Gubb-'nah belongs to dat party. Gubb-'nah Coleman should hab waited. Next week de new Gubb-'nah am gonna move in de mansion.

JIM

Governor Coleman's views were formed a long time ago. Politics has changed a lot. Perhaps he has mellowed. But what am I saying? Now, I've started talking like he is really here.

SAM

Guess ah's been gone 'bout long 'nuff. Guess ah may 'bout as well start moseyin' back.

JIM

Stands. Hold on, Sam. You and I have only a week left to serve the needs of Governor Richardson. He and his guest will be here. Let's stay and do everything we can to make him comfortable and to make Governor Coleman's stay enjoyable.

SAM

Ah done already gave Mista depaw'ted Gubb-'nah Coleman his breakfast. Wheah he was and what he done with de food were maughty confusin' . . . and ah doesn't necessarily hab to find out fa' as ah am concerned.

JIM

But you do want Governor Richardson to give his successor a good recommendation so you will be retained as mansion butler, don't you?

SAM

Ah's goin' to see how things keeps a-goin' ovah dere. If dis mystery keeps spreadin' from de guest room to de dinin' room to de parlor to all ober, ah's gonna find mahselb some new quarters, ah am.

JIM

You have an impressive record, Sam.

SAM

Expands chest. Since ya done mentioned it, ah guess ah do. All dem Gubb-'nahs keep sayin' how good they am at politics. Ah notices two terms am 'bout de most any ob dem stays. Ah's finishin' mah 'leventh—maybe eben startin' mah dozenth.

JIM

That should be worth a few days more of dignified behavior.

SAM

De way ah's always wanted it am to serve one right after de other. Eber time ah hab been 'fraid when a new Gubb-'nah moves in dat he ask—Sam, how does you vote when ya votes? And when ah would hab to say ah voted fo' de Gubb-'nah man dat jess moved out, ah could see dat would be a sad day fo' Sam. Dis time ah don't think ah's gonna care like ah use-'ta.

JIM

Don't worry, Sam. Things will work out. Just sit down over there and wait. This is New Year's Day, a holiday. We shouldn't keep ourselves in turmoil on a holiday.

SAM

Dis sho' am New Year's Day Mista sec-'tary boss. But somehow it seems to me dat it hab taken a turn fo' Halloween night. . . . Dead Gubb-'nahs ain't no bettah dan ghosts. **Sits down.** What am mo' dey oughtn't be 'sociatin' with respec-'able livin' folks.

JIM

Tidies his desk, straightens his tie and takes a key from a desk drawer. Sam, I nearly forgot a very important piece of furniture. When Governor Coleman occupied the office, there must have been a cuspidor in the room. Perhaps there is still one in the storage room. Take this key and bring one if you can find it—and too we'll need a rubber mat to go under it. . . . Governor Coleman would be sure to notice the absence and it could be disturbing. We must make him comfortable.

SAM

Rises. Ya'suh, Mista sec-'tary boss. **Takes the key.** Ah's glad to be ob service. Jess wait. Ah'll find dem things. **Opens door and starts to left in corridor.** His eye has caught an interest to the right and he turns and pauses before proceeding. Ya'suh Mista Gubb-'nah boss. Ah's hustlin' to make good mah errand fo' Mista White, suh.

ALAN

Voice from offstage. Don't let Jim work you too hard today, Sam. It's a holiday. **Jim picks up the newspaper on his desk and begins reading.** He looks up from moment to moment to eye the doorway.

SAM

In doorway. Na'suh Mista Gubb-'nah boss. Ah's jess persuin' a-roun' fo' him. And ah do hope ya and all de folks a-roun' and comin' a-roun' am comfortable. **Walks left and out of view.**

BRADLEY

Voice from offstage. This does look familiar, Alan. Many is the time I have come down the corridor to this door. Where is there another Capitol interior so inspiring?

ALAN

Voice from offstage. The majestic architecture is always impressive to me. I know exactly the feeling it gives you, Bradley. If these walls could speak they would say—the state is supreme. **Alan and Bradley enter.** **Jim lays his newspaper on the desk and rises.** **He stands beside his desk.** Jim, I want to introduce you to a friend of ours but the introduction is difficult. While you can't see or hear him, I want you to meet the former Governor who is in

company with me—Bradley Coleman. I must warn you, Jim, that Bradley can see and hear you. Governor—Jim White is my executive secretary.

JIM

Steps from beside his desk and stands looking toward Alan's right. How do you do, Governor Coleman?

ALAN

No Jim. Governor Coleman is here. Points to his own left.

JIM

Shifts his attention to Alan's left and again speaks to Bradley. I am still glad to meet you. You will see, Governor Coleman . . . Walks to one of the pictures lining the wall to the right side of the door. . . . that we have kept your portrait in a prominent place. Alan and Bradley turn half around to view the portrait.

BRADLEY

Well, I'll declare. That's the portrait Jake Grover painted. He arranged my sittings for Sundays and holidays . . . days like today when there weren't a lot of folks around. Have you had your portrait painted yet, Alan?

ALAN

So far, the legislature hasn't gotten around to any appropriation for my likeness. I still have a week to go. They may want to see that I finish it honorably.

BRADLEY

Turns away from the portraits. Always cautious, those legislators. They never want to gamble a dime unless they are feathering a nest.

ALAN

From your description, I can see the legislators were the same then as now.

BRADLEY

I can't kick too loudly about them, Alan. I used to be one. I was in the House here before I was Governor. I appointed myself to the Senate and went to Washington after I was Governor. . . . But I know them. They haven't changed and they won't change. But never condemn the legislative branch—here or at Washington. There are good and bad and the problems they face are just as troublesome as those that confront the Governor.

ALAN

Turns toward Jim. Make a note, Jim. . . . If a United States Senator from this state dies or resigns in the next week, remind me to appoint myself to the vacancy.

JIM

I'll make the note, Governor. But if you were to ask me, our Senators are hale and hardy and I think they like their job.

ALAN

Just my luck. No one has any compassion for a beaten down Presidential candidate who is washed-out as Governor.

BRADLEY

Public trusts look terribly important to you now, Alan. But take it from me. When you look back on all of it from my perspective, none of it seems quite so pressing. My thoughts now run much more to spirit than to fame and fortune.

ALAN

I recall your record, Bradley. But you never suffered a stunning defeat at the hands of the voters. I have. That is the hardest thing I have had to take. **The phone rings and Jim answers.**

JIM

Hello . . . No, this is White speaking. Who do you want, operator? . . . Oh, that again. I can take care of that I'm sure. . . . Thank you. **Replaces the instrument. To Alan.** Those pranksters have climbed the spiral stairs to the dome again. I will have to excuse myself and go up and see what mischief they may have been up to.

ALAN

If you need any help, Jim—call us.

JIM

I may need to. Although this is getting to be the usual thing on holidays. I almost consider myself an experienced hand in dealing with this particular indiscretion. **Opens the corridor door and finds Sam standing outside. Sam is holding the rubber mat and a large cuspidor.** Oh you're back with the cuspidor, Sam. **Takes the metal object and examines it.** It could stand some more polishing, but I'll take it in now. You and I have some pranksters to track down in the dome.

SAM

Ya'suh, Mista sec-'tary boss. **Looks into the room with wide eyes but he doesn't enter. Jim takes the mat from Sam's hand and carries it and the cuspidor to a position near his desk. He places the mat and then the cuspidor on the floor. He joins Sam in the corridor and closes the door behind them.**

BRADLEY

I'm rather surprised to find your executive secretary retains the habit. I had never thought the tobacco craze would last this long—except perhaps for some smoker addicts.

ALAN

Between you and me, Bradley, I believe Jim resurrected this receptacle for your supposed convenience. He probably associates it with your time here.

BRADLEY

He's got his time right, but he's got the man wrong. I was personally an abstainer from chewing even before I left for Washington . . . and that was some time before I left for good. As to the other use of tobacco, we have our code where I am now—and that code frowns on smoking in any form.

ALAN

If I had given the matter any thought, I should have suspected as much. Now, Bradley, is there anything in particular that you would like to be shown?

BRADLEY

If you don't mind, Governor Richardson, I would like to examine this book-table. It was here in my day, and I see it is still here. When I came in of a morning, I used to always toss my hat on this lower shelf like this. **Takes off hat and tosses it to the under-shelf.** Callers used to always look for the hat when they came in. If the hat was there, they figured I was in. If the hat was missing, they figured I was out. On days when I didn't want to be disturbed, I just carried my hat into the private office. **Alan removes his own hat and holds it in his right hand.**

ALAN

I would have been most appreciative of that suggestion about four years sooner.

BRADLEY

Perhaps it doesn't come too late, Alan. You are a young man, at least compared to a good many of us. Perhaps you will be back here for another term some day.

ALAN

If only politics worked that way. But it seems we either climb in politics or we tumble. My star has decidedly tumbled. You were a favored boy—your star always climbed.

BRADLEY

Perhaps my star wouldn't have climbed if I had to make my public contacts with a contraption like that wireless picture you showed me. . . . That gadget is amazing, if repulsive. . . . Perhaps I should have taken a second look at it while we were at the mansion.

ALAN

Once they get used to it, a lot of people seem to enjoy picture wireless. I should use the popular term—television. It's considered among the finer

media for comedians and politicians. So far, I believe the public confuses these two classes of entertainers.

BRADLEY

In my day, folks confused politicians more with preachers.

ALAN

I used that comparison in my campaign for Governor. I told the voters that I was like the ambitious minister—I was running to beat hell, and the opposition.

BRADLEY

You couldn't have gotten away with that remark in my time. Perhaps this idea of mixing comedy and politics isn't all myth.

ALAN

People around here are leaning more and more to the notion of taking the struggles of this life and the anticipations of the next in the stride of fun and experience. . . . Now, regarding that second look at television, Bradley, I can easily accommodate you. I have a set here in my private office.

BRADLEY

Such wasteful nonsense as the taxpayers tolerate in their Governors nowadays. When I merely had a telephone installed—it happened to be the first one in town—an editor from your party had to make his comment. He said—Governor Coleman has installed a telephone for ordering his cup of tea and bit of toast at any hour that may suit his fancy. Nowadays it seems the Governor is furnished an office to keep his private nickelodeon in. If only I could get my hands on that editor.

ALAN

One moment, Bradley. Have you seen last evening's paper? Goes to Jim's desk and steps back with a newspaper. Bradley takes the newspaper Alan hands him. He glances at the masthead.

BRADLEY

So the paper is still published? Turning the page to the editorial columns. I see there is a new editor—and I am sure it is a better newspaper for the change.

ALAN

It's Jim's favorite source of news—except for the morning edition from the metropolis. Between you and me the local editors give Jim a little play in the news occasionally. He has spent most of his life writing, and now whenever he is on the receiving end he eats it up.

BRADLEY

Jim is a conscientious type of man. I am glad to see the likes of him in the service of his state. Hands the newspaper back to Alan who replaces it to

Jim's desk. But now I'm sure my time is getting short. So if you want me to have another look at your wireless . . . your television picture—we should probably not dicker on newspaper editors. **Alan and Bradley walk into the private office and close the door. Jim and Sam enter the room. Sam, appears excited, and carries a folded flag over his extended forearms.**

SAM

Sneezes forcefully and recovering speaks. Mista sec-'tary boss, ah jess can't help mah knees shakin'. Is he in heah? . . . Tell me, Mista White—am Gubb-'nah Coleman in heah?

JIM

That's a difficult question, Sam. If he is, we can't see or hear him. If he isn't, it's the same way.

SAM

What does ya think den? And if he ain't heah, wheah hab he done gone?

JIM

Let's quit worrying, Sam. Governor Coleman and Governor Richardson were together. The present Governor isn't here so it is reasonable for us to assume his friend has gone also.

SAM

Sneezes vigorously. Mista sec-'tary boss. Please, suh, wheah can ah lay dis flag 'fore ah gets dis dust inhaled all through mah lungs and mah windpipe and pr'apps eben mah sop-ee-guses?

JIM

It certainly is dusty. I expect that flag has been stored away and gathering dust for decade upon decade. If we had left it above the dome longer, some of the dust might have blown away in the wind. **Sam sneezes again.** In spite of its dust and age, those colors seem to be in general good repair.

SAM

Ya'suh, mista sec-'tary boss. But dis dust am blowin' puffs all ober mah face. If dere am a suitable flag restin' place ah'd be most obliged to rest dis one.

JIM

The resting place for this flag is the museum, but it's closed today for the holiday. . . . Sam, you may put it on that table. If you'll just give me a hand with it—in a moment we can spread it out. Then the night man can vacuum the dust out before we send it to the museum.

SAM

Mah nostrils hab done vacuumed all de way down dem spiral stairs. **Jim and Sam spread the Stars and Bars across the booktable. An identifying portion of the flag hangs over the front side of the table.**

JIM

This flag did and does stand for a great part of the whole country's struggle to keep together and keep ahead. It's ridiculous for those pranksters to keep hoisting one of its kind over this Capitol and over places where it doesn't belong.

SAM

Ya'suh. Two of mah gran-pas fit ovah dis flag. One way-down South fit fo' it and de one from dis Capitol-town fit agin' it. . . . Aroun' heah it am jess like a toad stool in de mushroom bed 'sept fo' de dust.

JIM

That clears up the trouble here. Guess there is no need of us staying around any longer on a holiday. If you're ready, you may as well get back to the mansion. I'll be getting on home too. I'll phone the night man from there.

SAM

Ya'suh, ah's ready.

JIM

When the new executive secretary is in here next week, you may get a chance to tell him about the persistent pranksters. If he has swift legs perhaps he can put a stop to the unauthorized hoisting of the Confederate banner. The point of greatest height belongs only to Old Glory.

SAM

Ya'suh, ah'll tell him. **Jim takes his hat from the wrap tree. He and Sam leave. The door of the private office opens. Alan and Bradley walk slowly into the room. Alan has left his hat in the private office.**

BRADLEY

This television business is uncanny, Alan. But to me it's just like all worldly gadgets—you can't take it with you. If I had to, I believe I could get used to it easier than I could to this Civil Service you say the state has . . . Civil Service in the Commonwealth—I never thought it would come to pass.

ALAN

Well, it nearly didn't, Bradley . . . For over twenty years after it was put on the record and authorized by law, it was only a farce—despised by employees, ridiculed by office holders—ignored by the public. I hope what seems like progress under me has been real.

BRADLEY

Even if it has been, Alan, will the new Governor carry on with the steps you have taken?

ALAN

That remains to be seen. He is of your party. Perhaps you could more nearly answer for him.

BRADLEY

Hardly, Alan. From what you have told me, things have changed so much—I believe I would have to examine the whole picture before I would know what party to stand with nowadays.

ALAN

A great many people share that same desire for examination, I can assure you.

BRADLEY

One of the difficult things for me to swallow right now is my party's selection of Philip Bacon for President. How he ever got elected—is, I assure you, completely beyond me. . . . My granddaughter, Martha, could have had him when she was younger. I always said, and I'll continue to say, it is better to be right than to be First Lady.

ALAN

I'm glad to hear your views Governor Coleman. Perhaps you will be joining my party.

BRADLEY

I can't go that far. But I'm doing some thinking. **Surprised as his eyes fall to the book-table and the outstretched Stars and Bars. Shouts.** Alan, you have explained many things to me today. **Angry and amazed.** Now, can you explain the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy—draped over my hat and beneath my picture? Has this so called party of yours surrendered the honor of the Union Army to the humiliation of the Confederacy?

ALAN

Shaken but striving for poise. All I can say, Bradley, is that I can see those holiday pranksters have been at it again. The display of the flag beneath your honored portrait has not been—I am sure—intended to offend you. . . . You will understand, of course, that since your image and voice are apparent only to me, that some member of my staff may have spread the flag over the table without any thought of disrespect to your hat. Bradley, I believe you and I are the only ones who can see that hat.

BRADLEY

Snatches his hat and brushes it briskly. I understand, Alan, that this rebel flag—never allowed in this building in my time—is now enshrined in the Governor's own office, beneath my portrait and over my hat.

ALAN

Above and beyond all this, Bradley, it seems to me that we must remember that our great Republic is growing from within. As hard as it may be for me to express it, I'll try. . . . The trials and tribulations of your generation have become greatly mellowed as they have come into the minds and hearts of my generation. The flag these carefully sewn materials represent—the

Stars and Bars—has even come to be loved by the citizens of this overwhelmingly anti-rebel state.

BRADLEY

Hold your tongue, Alan, lest you get to talking like a rebel.

ALAN

Frankly, I am a rebel—a rebel against anyone and everyone unwilling to let bygones be bygones. Nowadays, we in the North have come also to revere the memories of Confederate veterans. . . . It can be no secret, Bradley, that 160 million people, including those of this state, love the Nation that was not divided and will not be divided. The North has become a land of scenic wonders to visitors from the South. The South has become the playland for tourists from the North.

BRADLEY

Puts his hat on with a firm but controlled two hand motion. I suppose I was just being an old foggy, wasn't I Alan?

ALAN

No, I'm glad you spoke, Bradley. It is better to speak out than to keep thoughts bottled up. You have missed out on many of the years a lot of us spent in talking-out our pent up feelings. This was a good chance for you to release some of yours.

BRADLEY

You know, Alan, I like the way you express yourself. It beats me how Philip Bacon ever got to the voters ahead of you.

ALAN

Coming from a past champion of the opposition—those words touch me.

BRADLEY

Steps reluctantly towards the door. Alan follows. I'm long overdue getting back. If it hadn't been for the changing of the years last night, I don't suppose I would have gotten away at all. This is my second time around in quite some time, you know. No telling when I'll have a chance to make it again. So take care of yourself, Alan. **Moves to the door.**

ALAN

Opening the door. You may expect a new Governor here to greet you on your next visit. This week will conclude my administration.

BRADLEY

So it will. But before I'm on my way . . . **Points right in the corridor. . . .** I wonder if you would explain to me what in tarnation that cabinet is for—the one in the corridor.

ALAN

Why that's the coke bar for the employees. A beverage is dispensed, quite mild, I assure you. We find the strain of the day sometimes calls for refreshment.

BRADLEY

And the state employees go there for their noon meal?

ALAN

As a matter of fact, it is reserved more for the morning and afternoon recess time.

BRADLEY

Looks forward through the doorway, amazed. Recess at the Capitol! No wonder you lost at the polls. The taxpayers couldn't possibly have tolerated the casual ways of your party. . . . **Smiles . . .** And the editor of your party had the nerve to write—Governor Coleman has installed a telephone for ordering his cup of tea and bit of toast at any hour that may suit his fancy. . . . I do have to say Good-bye.

ALAN

Good-bye Bradley. And may you always be with the best of spirits. . . . Good-bye.

BRADLEY

I hope so. . . . If those rebel spirits find out their flag and my portrait shared honors at the Capitol today—they'll never let me hear the end of it. **Bradley leaves and Alan closes the door. He folds the extending portion of the Stars and Bars back on the table surface and gives Bradley's portrait a quick salute. The lights fade.**

ACT IV—Scene 2.

The evening following the final day of tenure for Governor Richardson's administration.

The third floor elevator nook in the lobby of the administration building at Capitol city's commercial airport.

Sam is standing beside the closed elevator door examining a yard long ticket as the floor indicator beside the door moves from one to three. The elevator door opens.

CARRIE

Third floor—Airline reservations and passenger waiting room—Sundries stand and lunches. **Benjy leaves the elevator. He immediately encounters Sam.**

BENJY

Sam, I'm sure glad to see you. I've been looking all over for the new Governor. **Takes off his cap and slips the telegram it holds, out.** I have a telegram for him. You can sign for it and give it to him.

SAM

Ah 'preciates de honor. But seems ah ain't workin' fo' de new Gubb-'nah. He done brought his own private butlah. Ah am at dis time commencin' mah career as exclusive-butlah private-citizen Sam Barrington.

BENJY

That's bad news, Sam. I wish you a bucketful of luck wherever you go.

SAM

Ah's goin' alright. But ah wishes ya wouldn't wish me luck by de bucketful, 'cause dere am goin' to be a pow-'ful lot ob water under wheah ah's goin'.

BENJY

Where's that, Sam?

SAM

First ah flys to Europe, den ah flys all de way to Africa, and from dere ah flys all de way back to Memphis to visit kinfolks ah hasn't seen fo' ober twenty years.

BENJY

They'll sure be glad to see you.

SAM

Ya'suh, dey will be right glad to see me, dat am until dey knows ah's de butlah who ain't butlahin' no mo'. Den dey will starting cuttin' down mah corn pone.

BENJY

However you want your luck, Sam—that's the way I wish. I've gotta find the new Governor now. **Gets on the open elevator. Carrie closes the door. The indicator moves from three to two. Sam resumes study of the long ticket. Mrs. Hilltop walks up and interrupts his reading.**

AUDRY

Sam, where is Governor Richardson? I do so want to see him before he leaves town.

SAM

Miss' Hilltop, ah packed de Gubb-'nah's baggage dis mornin'. Ah recons he's either done gone or done goin'.

AUDRY

Oh dear, I wish I had more time. You will see him sometime and give him a message from me, won't you? You are so faithful. **The floor indicator moves from two to one.**

SAM

Ah may see him and den again Ah mayn't. Dese am de goin'-away-est times ah eber did see. But if ah goes, ah'll gib him de message.

AUDRY

You're just splendid, Sam. . . . Tell him Mrs. Hilltop wants him to be sure and return unfailingly for a repeat descendants and Governors mansion party. I just feel sure I can get the new Governor to plan for it.

SAM

Miss' Hilltop, could ah add to dat—return unfailingly in de flesh?

AUDRY

Why yes, if it is easier to remember that way, I suppose it's alright. . . . I simply must go now. **The indicator moves from one to three and the door opens. Jim and Martha get off. Audry gets on.** Oh, hello, hello, Jim—and Miss Riley, I believe. I'm in a simply dreadful hurry.

JIM

Nice to see you, Mrs. Hilltop.

MARTHA

You want to congratulate Mr. White. He has just swept me right off my feet.

AUDRY

Oh congratulations, congratulations. . . . Aha, I knew it. It is the beauty of the Capitol—the love of citizen for citizen. You are so fortunate. Good-bye. **Carrie closes the elevator door and the indicator moves to one.**

JIM

That's a mighty long ticket you're holding, Sam. Don't tell me the new Governor is going that far to run away from his responsibilities.

SAM

Na'suh, Mista White. Dis ticket am not fo' de new Gubb-'nah. It am fo' de old butlah. What ah's done feared fo' 'leven administrations hab done happened, and all de fear of it am gone. Ah's jess gonna fly away and enjoy mahself.

MARTHA

Flying is the most wonderful thing that can happen to people next to love and responsibility. The words at the church still ring in my ears. . . .

What a beautiful name, Mrs. White . . . White always makes me think of doves. . . . We'll just be two white doves floating away won't we, Jimmy dear?

JIM

Yes, Martha dear. We're two doves. Perhaps the wings have had a little clipping, but vigor and determination will keep us on a straight flight.

SAM

Did ya gran-pappy Coleman, de most respectful Gubb-'nah, get to de wedding?

MARTHA

Oh Sam, you know that Governor Coleman has been dead for years and years!

SAM

Dats zackly what ah keeps tellin' mahself. Gubb-'nah Coleman am dead. But ya know dat man hab such a strong spirit, it keeps flyin' right back at me.

MARTHA

Grandpa was a terribly strong man in every way. But speaking of flying, dear, we must pick up our tickets.

JIM

Nice to see you again, Sam. We wish you the best of luck.

SAM

Ya'suh, ya'mam—and good honeymoonin' Mista and Miss' Dove . . . or . . . White. **Carrie closes the elevator door. The indicator moves to one. Martha and Jim leave Sam.**

ANNOUNCER

Voice from offstage through the public address speaker near the elevator. Flight seventy-one is loading on the main apron. All passengers holding passage on Madrid flight ninety-two, please board flight seventy-one to Atlantic terminal.

SAM

Aloud to himself. Flight seventy-one and flight ninety-two. Ah's gotta look at dis ticket. **Examines the ticket closely. The indicator moves from one to three.** Dat sho' am me—dat flight seventy-one. And all mah baggage am clear down below. Elevator, wheah is ya? . . . Oh, dere ya am. **The elevator door opens.**

CARRIE

Third floor—Airline reservations and passenger waiting room—Sundries stand and lunches. **Alan steps off the elevator.**

SAM

To Alan while moving into the elevator. Mista Gubb-'nah boss, ah's done got a message fo' ya from Miss' Hilltop but ah's gotta catch mah plane now. Ah'll write it to ya from Europe. Turns around to face forward in the elevator.

ALAN

Fine, Sam. . . . Of course. Have a good trip. The elevator door closes. Alan turns from the closed door to closely face Jim who is hurrying to get on the elevator. Martha is beside Jim and both are in a running walk. Carrie has belatedly seen Martha and Jim approaching and she reopens the elevator door. As the pair rush quickly past him, Alan turns toward the door attempting to catch their attention. Martha and Jim get on the elevator.

ALAN

What's the great hurry you two are in?

JIM

Martha and I have to catch our honeymoon flight, Governor. I meant to mention it. . . . We'll write to you from the other side. Carrie again closes the door and the indicator moves from three to one. Alan half raises his hand in an unsatisfactory send off gesture. As Alan drops his hand, he turns, and then raises the hand to his chin and speaks aloud to himself. Bradley enters left.

ALAN

To Europe! Sam said . . . to Europe! Bradley comes up behind Alan and taps him on the shoulder. Well, well . . . Bradley. You got back sooner than you thought.

BRADLEY

It's hardly that way, Governor. They caught me being out—and I didn't get back. . . . I'm glad in a way, though. I got to see Martha and Jim off on their honeymoon. You did a mighty smart job of match making. There's no comparison between Jim and Philip Bacon.

ALAN

No, I don't suppose there is. Bacon is the new President. Jim is newly out of a job.

BRADLEY

That isn't important, Alan. Jim has spirit. Spirit is the thing that's important.

ALAN

From your perspective, I guess that's the way to look at it. . . . What are you going to do now, Bradley? Indicator moves from one to two.

BRADLEY

What can I do now? I'm properly grieved and dismissed from here and I'm locked out there. But Alan, I can still fly.

ALAN

But Bradley. . . . Are you really fixed for plane fare to fly from now on? The indicator beside the elevator door moves from two to one.

BRADLEY

Plane fare, son? You forget my nature is minus image and sound. All I do is find a transport with at least one vacant seat. My worries are over. After the indicator has moved from one to three, the door opens. Rebecca steps off. She is carrying a folded newspaper. The conversation in which Alan and Bradley are engaged distracts them from observing Rebecca's approach. She stands close behind Alan, watching him. Carrie closes the door and the indicator moves to one. What are your plans now, Alan?

ALAN

Plans? . . . I haven't really thought. Is a Governor who has finished his term supposed to have plans? Is a man soundly defeated for President supposed to have plans? Indicator moves from one to three. As Carrie opens the door, Gene gets off. Rebecca pulls Gene to one side, still back of Alan. Gene lowers his head as Rebecca whispers. Carrie watches Alan from the door.

REBECCA

Ssh—he's thinking.

ALAN

It seems to me, Bradley, that plans are for the living or the really dead. When a man dies politically only, he seems to lose his spirit.

BRADLEY

Never lose your spirit, son. That's where all the fun is. Well, I guess I had better get down to the apron and look for another free ride to nowhere. If you ever again try to beat Philip Bacon, I'll be around doing my best for you. . . . I'd better get on this empty elevator. So long, Alan—hope you're older than I was when you cash in your ticket. Steps into elevator. Alan, in seeming dejection, nods his parting to Bradley.

ALAN

So long. So long. . . . Ticket . . . that's it. I'm going to clinch the ticket right now. Rushes offstage to the right. Carrie, believing her elevator is empty, comes into the center area of the elevator nook and leaves the door open. Her remarks seem intended for Rebecca and Gene.

CARRIE

He surely is mighty despondent. The way he talks away to himself, I'm afraid he's soon going to be too broke to pieces to get repaired. . . .

There's my buzzer. I have to go now. Bradley waves to the audience as Carrie closes the door. The indicator moves from three to one.

GENE

If I could only think. We must do something. He's made a remarkable record. We all know how hard he has tried. And now unless someone cheers him up—and quick—he may do something desperate.

REBECCA

No, he wouldn't. Governor Richardson is such a lamb. I just know he wouldn't do anything to hurt himself or anybody. . . . But, if you want him cheered up, I'm one of the best cheerer-uppers you could find. Just hold this paper, Mister Rogers, and leave Alan Richardson in my care. **Hands the newspaper to Gene. As Alan enters from right stage, Rebecca startles him by turning a full cart-wheel and coming up directly in front of him. She smiles provocatively. If it isn't Governor Richardson. . . . How silly of poor little me to act this way. But when I see a big, handsome Governor finish up a wonderful full term, I just almost want to throw back my head and kiss him.**

ALAN

Hello, Rebecca. Hello, Gene. . . . Now what is it you're trying to say, Rebecca? It's almost time for Gene's plane to leave. We'll have to discuss it rapidly if it concerns Gene. **Rebecca registers an eager-to-please smile and turns quickly away.**

REBECCA

To Gene. Quick! I want the paper. **Taking the paper from Gene she turns quickly to Alan. Here. I've brought back the editorial you wanted. I'm sorry I didn't leave it with you before.**

ANNOUNCER

Voice from offstage through the public address speaker near the elevator. Passengers on the local to State Line and intermediate points must now board. This is last call for flight seventy-five to State Line. Local flight seventy-five is loading on the main apron. **Indicator moves from one to three.**

ALAN

The editorial? . . . **Reading. . . .** Nobody owes any gratitude to anybody. Voters of this state owe nothing . . . Oh yes, Miss Winters. Thank you very much. I am going to write to that editor—perhaps a little late, but I'll write. **Carrie opens the elevator door. Hal starts to get off, then seeing the group of Alan, Gene and Rebecca before him, hesitates.**

CARRIE

Third floor—Airline reservations and passenger waiting room—Sundries stand and lunches. Third floor—out please.

ALAN

Your plane has been called, Gene. If you tarry long, you're going to miss it.

GENE

But Governor, I thought you'd be taking the plane back to the hometown with me.

CARRIE

Becoming irritated. Third floor—please!

ALAN

That was my plan, Gene. But I got to thinking. It's four years—if then—before I'll need to hustle around. So I turned my ticket back and cancelled my reservation. Why fly when there's plenty of time to walk? . . . I guess I got the idea when I was talking to Governor Coleman's ghost.

HAL

Stepping from the elevator. O-ho, so there is a ghost! Now we get the story, Gene. Pulls out his pencil and notebook as does Gene. Carrie folds her arms and stands in the door of the elevator as an interested observer.

GENE

Come on, Governor. Give with the ghost yarn!

ALAN

Well, it's this way. It all started at the mansion party. . . . There were eight of us we thought . . .

REBECCA

Interrupting. And here is my favorite handsome Capitol columnist, Hal Jeffrey. No matter which party wins, you stay here four years every time. Now poor little me doesn't have to stay here all alone. When I think about it, I could just throw back my head and . . .

CARRIE

Interrupting. Say, why don't you Capitol guys wise up? Every four years you have to fly home—and a new crop fly back. Why can't you be like her and hitch up with the Civil Service? She stays every time. . . . Now, it's none of my business—but it's getting late. That plane is going to take off. Is anybody going down?

ALL

In unison. Going down. Hurry onto the elevator.

ALAN

Hal, Gene and Rebecca—you heard her. We're going down. So all heads up!

ALL

In unison. Heads up in the Commonwealth! Carrie closes the elevator door. The indicator starts moving from three towards one.

C U R T A I N

Heads Up In The Commonwealth

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Schesley family has been long standing to Champaign County and its politics.

Matt Schesley Jr., for many years was the Democratic Committeeman for the 16th precinct of Champaign. After his death, it was only natural that the Democratic party would make his son Mattis Schesley III the write in candidate for the same office his father had held.

Successfully elected to fill his father's post, young Matt was only able to briefly serve due to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In December 1941, Matt joined the Army Air Corp. During his service, he was a radio news editor for the War Department, and worked in public relations at six different air fields. His last assignment was with the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service in editing and intelligence capacities.

When the war ended, Matt served in Washington with the War Manpower Commission until returning to Champaign in 1946 in an unsuccessful bid to the Illinois Legislature. During the years that followed Mattis Schesley III maintained an active stance in Democratic politics in Champaign County, while serving as Chief Tabulator of bids in the State Purchasing Division of the Illinois Dept. of Finance during the Horner Administration. He also was the photostat manager for the State Printing Division during the Adlai Stevenson Administration. He ended his political career as the Democratic precinct committeeman as his father had before him.

In presenting the play "Heads Up in the Commonwealth", Matt Schesley looks upon the question of how advisable it may be to elect the children of distinguished statesman to same or similar offices as their parents. He takes the stance that time and expediency may be served by so doing.

After reading "Heads Up", you will be better able to judge if policies formed by succeeding generations of members of families in government are worthy of serious consideration for continuation.



Mattis Schesley III

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